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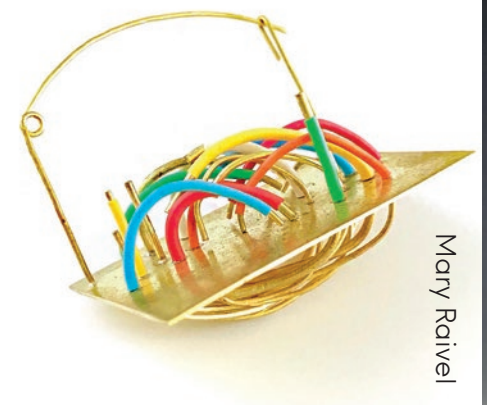

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Artists. Designers. Jewelers. Metalsmiths. The Society of North American Goldsmiths advances jewelry and metalsmithing by inspiring creativity, encouraging education, and fostering community.
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By the time this issue finds you, spring will be giving way to summer in the Northern Hemisphere. Though this season of growth and renewal is often a source of optimistic but trite metaphors, what I find striking about it is the squadron of airborne environmental irritants that accompany the verdant eruption of leaf and blossom. Allergic responses vary individually and are generally something to be soothed, remedied, and, in extreme cases, the triggers avoided as a preventative measure. This facet of regeneration is in itself a poetic reminder that the price of growth, for some, is discomfort.

It is this juxtaposition—of cause-and-effect distress and the promise of progress—that I hope readers hold in mind while absorbing the at times weighty topics in this issue. For one, Leslie Boyd's article *Calling You In*—the title a reference to an interventionist approach for disrupting harm—challenges jewelry educators to reimagine their roles in the structural inequities of jewelry academia. These themes are further illuminated by Velina Robinson Glass's critical feature *Moving Beyond Acknowledgment*, on the systemic inequities faced by Black American jewelry and metals artists. The runner-up for *Metalsmith's* "New Voices Writing Competition," Rebecca Schena, proposes models for the re-contextualization of "difficult adornments." All three articles approach the fact of these imbalances with resources for course correction on individual and institutional levels.

Another new voice in this issue, Sebastian Grant, celebrates the rich expressions of Black and African Diaspora jewelry artists past and present in his new series *Explorations in Black Jewelry*. Grant's reflections on whose legacies are preserved and why are echoed in the first of a two-part article by Glenn Adamson on the sources of the American Blacksmithing revival. In her review of the book *In Flux: American Jewelry and the Counterculture*, Rebecca McNamara's appreciation for the text's resonance with the current moment is tempered by the question: Whose stories remain untold? Similar enquiries arise in Jackie Andrews's review of *AMEND*, a virtual exhibition in which jewelers engaged with the complex history of women's suffrage in the US during the 2020 Presidential election season.

Among the lessons of the last year is that progress is akin to a fibrous root system, whose strength relies on many branching tendrils, rather than a singular taproot. I find comfort in the idea that, below the surface, each thread-thin shoot is doing its small part to bolster and nurture the canopy of wildflowers that bedecks the field.

—Adriane Dalton, Editor
editor@snagmetalsmith.org

The mission of *Metalsmith* is to explore, analyze, promote, and document excellence and innovation in the field of jewelry and metalsmithing. In achieving this goal, SNAG will produce and oversee the direction and content of a publication that will serve as a significant resource for the metalsmithing field. The editorial content of *Metalsmith* will emphasize contemporary activities, makers, and ideas and incorporate supportive content, relevant critical issues, and the exchange of viewpoints.

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The Society of North American Goldsmiths is an international nonprofit organization that serves as the primary organization of jewelers and metal artists in North America. Anyone interested in the related fields may become a member. Members include independent studio artists, teachers, students, gallerists, collectors, curators, and writers.

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DAY 1

Thursday, June 24, 2 PM — 7 PM
(all times noted are EDT)

Lifetime Achievement Award and Educational Endowment Scholarships Announcement
2:00 PM - 3:15 PM
Speaker Eleanor Moty
SNAG's Lifetime Achievement Award is the highest honor the Society can bestow upon an individual. This prestigious honor is reserved for leaders in the field who made significant contributions to contemporary metalsmithing throughout their careers.

The Future of Critical & Curatorial Work
3:30 PM - 4:30 PM
Sebastian Grant, Sarah Darro, Jessica Andersen, and Steven KP
This panel highlights four curators who are pushing the boundaries of traditional curatorial work through the lenses of who is included, how work is presented, and curation as the vehicle for challenging norms.

Taking the Initiative : The Society of Inclusive Blacksmiths
4:30 PM - 5:15 PM
Tanya Crane and Lisa Geertsen
Lisa Geertsen shares the inspiring story of eleven women who saw a need for diversity in their professional community and gathered together to build a sculptural bench...and a new, inclusive organization: The Society of Inclusive Blacksmiths.

Keynote Presentation—INSPIRE
Finding Focus
5:30 PM - 6:30 PM
Kirsten Haydon
Kirsten Haydon presents on the role of inspiration within her practice over the past 20 years; discussing formative moments, days and periods of inspiration that have led to years of sustained and inspired creative practice.

Exhibition in Motion Viewing Party
6:30 PM - 7:15 PM
Meghan Patrice Riley and Laura Wood
Artists who were selected for the 2020 Exhibition in Motion have graciously documented their larger than life wearables in photo and video, for a virtual visual feast. Grab a cocktail and enjoy the show!

After Hours: Hopin Hangout
7:00 PM +
Get together with friends and make new acquaintances. Explore the interactive platform to chat publicly and privately and even have video conversations with other attendees.

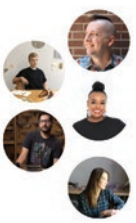
DAY 2

Friday, June 25, 12 PM — 7 PM
(all times noted are EDT)

The Future of Education
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM
Karen Smith, Uri Samet, and Lori Gipson
This year's speakers come from different facets of education and each will give a brief presentation on their program, organization, or educational initiatives.

Community Engagement: Here & Now
1:45 PM - 2:45 PM
Nadia Massoud, Malyia Mcnaughton, and Aimee Martinez
Panelists present on the ways they have used jewelry, and more broadly craft, to build, strengthen and empower their communities.

Business Beyond COVID
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Tara Locklear, Viviana Langhoff, and Sol Proaño
Our panelists share their pandemic experiences, and new business opportunities as we shift to a new normal.



Emerging Artists Rapid Fire Presentations
4:00 PM - 5:15 PM
Phil Ambrose, Emily Culver, Dierra Jones, Guadalupe Navarro, and MJ Tyson
Early Career Artist presentations are an opportunity for SNAG to introduce five early career artists and their work to a wider audience. Each will be a fast-paced, 10-minute talk.

Educational Booth Meet & Greet
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM
University programs, craft schools, and workshop centers give studio tours, talk about upcoming programming, and meet and greet with conference attendees!

Hydraulic Forming Tools
5:30 PM - 6:30 PM
Phil Poirier
See how to add dimension to your designs with fluid curves and domed shapes, featuring new Bonny Doon Tru-Shape silhouette dies. *Sponsored by Rio Grande.*

In Conversation: Educators, Students, and Studio Artists
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Join any of these informal group conversations—a continuation of the favorite monthly virtual meet-ups.

After Hours: Hopin Hangout
7:00 PM +
See description on day one.

DAY 3

Saturday, June 26, 11 AM – 7 PM
(all times noted are EDT)

Creatives and Caregivers
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Taylor Saleem, Natalie Macellaio, and April Higashi
Three panelists discuss maintaining balance with their creative practice and being a parent or caregiver.

Tech Panel: Chat with the Experts
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Charles Lewton-Brain, Jeff Georgantes , and Corkie Bolton
Experts share some of their favorite technical tips and tricks and take questions live from the audience. Get answers, and maybe even share a tip or trick yourself with our community of makers.

Virtual Teaching Panel
1:15 PM - 2:30 PM
Curtis Arima and Barbara Minor
Virtual teaching can open new opportunities for all types of instructors. Panelists share their setups, tips, tricks and what works and what doesn't translate in the virtual workshop or classroom. *Sponsored by Pocosin Arts.*

Ethical and Sustainable Practices
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Ute Decker
As a political economist-turned-journalist-turned-jeweler, Ute Decker is a pioneer of the international ethical jewelery movement and one of the first, worldwide, to create jewels in fair trade gold. Ute established the world's largest online resource on green jewelery practices. *Sponsored by Columbia Gem House.*

Enamel Alternatives
4:15 PM - 5:00 PM
See a trio of options from Invicon for adding durable, saturated color with the look and feel of enamel.
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Capstone Presentation—ASPIRE
Connecting Craft with Community
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM
Frankie Flood
The potential that Craft has to serve local and global communities through design and fabrication has been the focus of Frankie Flood's recent research as he continues to combine traditional craft practice with digital technology. His recent research regarding 3D printed prosthetics and custom adaptive devices have spread worldwide while his creation of the Digital Craft Research Lab has created new areas of study for students interested in digital fabrication.

Virtual Gallery Crawl
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

After Hours: Hopin Hangout
7:00 PM +
See description on day one.

DAY 4

Sunday, June 27, 11 AM – 2 PM
(all times noted are EDT)

Vendor Booths Live
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Visit with:
- Arrowmont School of Crafts
- Columbia Gem House
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Virtual Gallery Crawl
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Hopin Hangout
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM
See description on day one.

What Do You Really Need for Engraving?
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Shane Hendren
Rio Grande's Shane Hendren found his bliss in engraving. Join him for a deep-dive discussion and demonstration of tools and processes. *Sponsored by Rio Grande.*

Main Stage Presentation Recordings
Did you miss a fantastic discussion or lecture? Each day's recordings will be posted on Hopin in the Expo for you to go back and see. Recordings will also be sent out after the conference.

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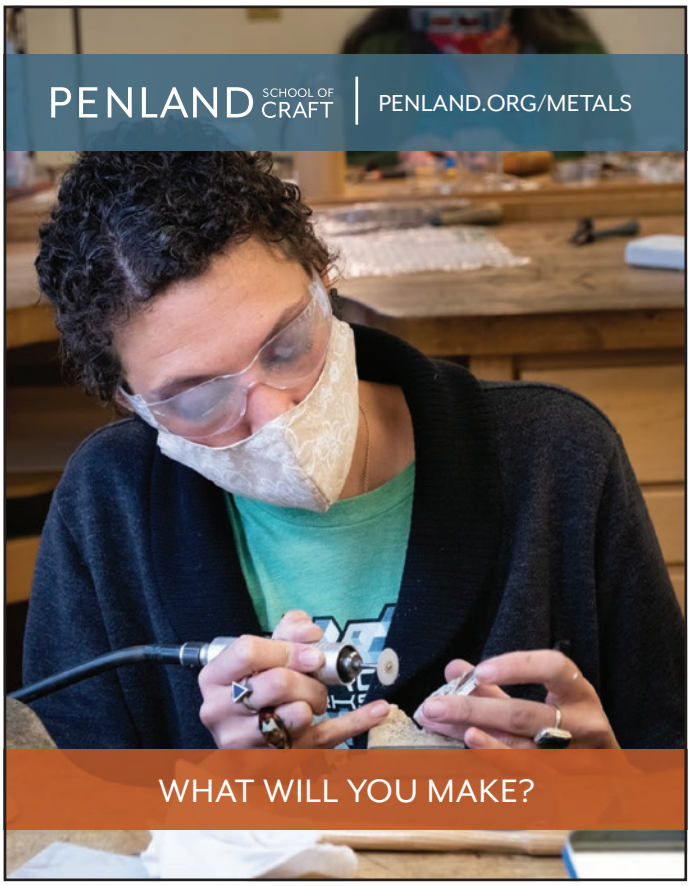

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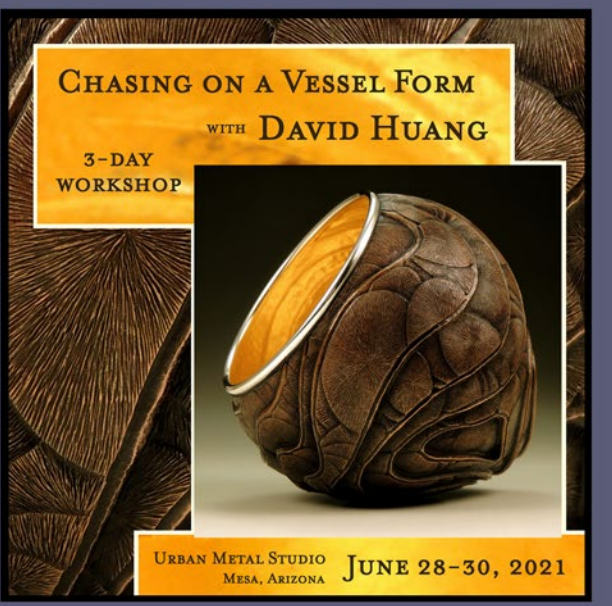

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NEW & NOTEWORTHY

BY LAUREN ECKERT

Cleaning of gilt components

Photo by Jessica Walthew © Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum

CASTING A LIGHT ON CONSERVATION

Tablescapes: Designs for Dining, a recent exhibition at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in New York, unveiled as its focal point a newly restored *surtout de table* (table centerpiece) designed by Pierre-Philippe Thomire, circa 1810. The object, which may have been a gift from Napoleon to his stepson,[1] is a ten-foot silver leaf mirror framed by sumptuous ormolu (gilt-brass) decoration. The minute details of the draped figures, putti, satyrs, and other neoclassical metalwork[2] would have been easy for museum patrons to miss if not for the collaborative efforts of the Cooper Hewitt conservators with the digital development and exhibitions teams to reveal their processes.

Beginning with the conservation team's extensive research, which employed 3D scanning and digital imaging processes, the digital development and exhibitions teams created interactive displays with videos featuring the surface treatment process, and elements demonstrating what these techniques revealed to conservators about the history and creation of the centerpiece. For example, users could learn about how conservators came to suspect that a pair of female figures is actually a cast replica, known as a *surmoulage*, added during a repair in the late nineteenth century.[3]

The cast decorative forms surrounding the centerpiece include a wide variety of surface textures, ranging from delicate feathers to flesh and fur, which were created by elaborate chasing and burnishing. Such fine textures are most visible under a light source directed at the piece at a sharp angle,[4] unlike typically diffuse exhibition lighting. Thus, one of the interactive displays showed users the results of a process called Reflective Transformation Imaging (RTI), in which conservators combined up to eighty photos of a single detail in different lighting arrangements.[5] By dragging a finger around the screen, users could move the light source and appreciate the textures with a level of detail and proximity not possible in a typical gallery setting. These interactive RTI images, along with other conservation treatments, are also featured in blog posts on the museum's website and are still available for viewing.

As has become the trend for many highly respected conservation departments, the Cooper Hewitt recently created an Instagram account, @cooperhewittconservation, chronicling their conservation work and shining further light on this often behind-the-scenes aspect of cultural preservation.

THE JEWELRY OF GODS AND MAGIC

Sociologist Max Weber, in his 1993 treatise, *The Sociology of Religion*, described our modern society as one in which scientific rationality is more highly valued than belief, and the world is no longer "a great enchanted garden." But as more people become disillusioned with the promises of modern society, paganism and the occult are benefiting from a period of renewed interest in Western popular culture. Many artists, in a variety of media, are becoming more attentive to the folk tales passed down through generations, the herbal remedies and charms of the "cunning folk" (practitioners of divination and folk healing, as termed in the United Kingdom and Appalachia), and the pantheons of "wild gods," including nature deities such as Pan, the Green Man, and the horned god, and other pagan gods such as Hecate or Brigid. Creatives such as Wyatt Nestor-Pasicznyk, Lori Talcott, Chloé Valorso, Cody Dickerson of Borealis Ironworks, and Blood and Dust are stirring up supernatural forces using a magical tool employed since ancient times: adornment.

Wyatt Nestor-Pasicznyk
Self-Made, 2021
Champlevé enameled copper, spring steel
1¾ x 3½ in.
Photo by the artist

Jewelry artist Wyatt Nestor-Pasicznyk populated his recent thesis show *Forest Gods* with creatures born

Lori Talcott
Materiae Remedium, 2020
Silver, steel, lead, wool, wood, glass, mirror, natural sponge, jet, slate, vintage glass beads, vintage ribbon
21 x 6 x 2 in. (both necklaces together)
Photo: Jenny Riffle

from a fusion of classical myth and rural Appalachian folktales. The colorful enameled three-headed dogs, minotaurs, and equine personifications of death and famine translate a personal mythos into wearable illustration. Paralleling the development of folk tales to explain the unknown, these chimeric creatures' imaginary bodies are allegories for rural LGBTQI+ experiences of reinvention and self-making.

Seattle-based jeweler Lori Talcott evokes the enchanted through her practice; hers is a refreshingly authentic and sincere perspective on a topic often used for merely aesthetic inspiration. Talcott's recent work harnesses *sympathetic magic,* or the idea that influence over matter is found through the relationships and resemblances between certain things. This interconnectivity allows Talcott to create intimate jewelry pieces that connect to the body's ailments through what she describes as "material metaphors." Similar to the libraries of remedies kept by wise women and cunning folk, Talcott's materials come from an apothecary-like collection primed to make magic tangible for those seeking protection and healing. Talcott hails from a family of jewelers and her craft was passed to her as many magical beliefs are passed down through generations. By connecting to her heritage, the histories that intersect magic and jewelry, and the synchronicities inherent to her materials, Talcott's jewelry shows the enchantment in a universe that might not be so random after all.

Blood and Dust is an artist duo comprised of Hayley Evans and Lisbeth Poirier, who use adornment to express a different side of contemporary occult art. Primarily musicians, Evans and Poirer also delve into photography and costuming influenced by their

Blood and Dust (Hayley Evans and Lizbeth Poirier)
Cernunnos, 2019
Digital photography
Photo courtesy of the artists

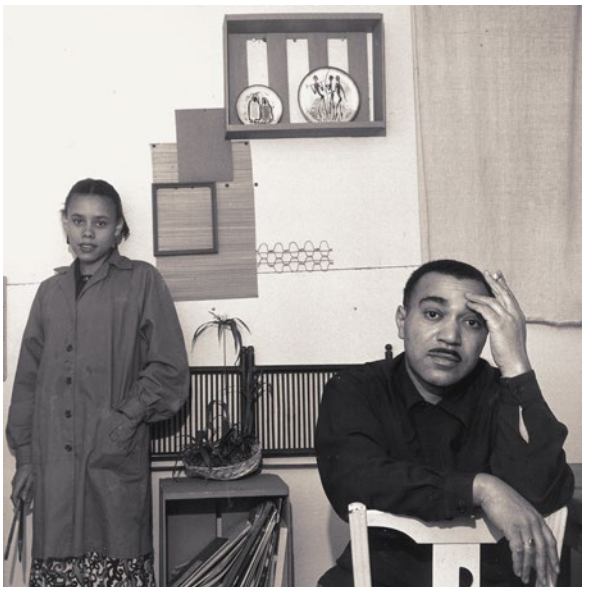
interests in horror cinema and folklore. For the cover of a recent yule-themed issue of the folk horror zine *Hellebore*, Blood and Dust created a wintry portrait using jewelry, metalwork, and facial adornment as tools for subverting the often masculine and lush depictions of the pagan deity Cernunnos, who presides over the entire natural cycle, including death and winter. Evans and Poirier aimed to characterize the deity with the nuance and complexity of seasonal change. Rather than Cernunnos's typical bestial horns, their portrait subject wears the broken branches of a slumbering forest; instead of verdant greens, she wears dead leaves carved with occult sigils. The chilling imagery is not static, however, as Blood and Dust's Cernunnos also holds a forked staff, atop which is a singular candle bearing the warm flame of new life. Cernunnos's iron stang connects this flame back to the earth, demonstrating with the assuredness of the seasonal cycle that there is a warmth, change, and hope found in the midst of wintry darkness, be it seasonal or societal rebirth.

Lauren Eckert is an artist, writer, and art conservator based in New Jersey.

1 Sarah D. Coffin, "Surtout De Table: Sustenance of Political Power," Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, accessed July 22, 2019, https://www.cooperhewitt.org/2018/09/05/surtout-de-table-sustenance-of-political-power. / **2** Jessica Walthew, Sarah Barack, Adam Quinn, and Nolan Hill, "Sharing Conservation Imaging Research with the Public," *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation*, 59:1 (January 27, 2020): 18-26, https://doi.org/10.1080/01971360.2019.1690908. / **3** Ibid, 8-26. / **4** Jessica Walthew, "Conserving the Surtout De Table: Gilt Metalwork," Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum, accessed July 22, 2019, https://www.cooperhewitt.org/2018/10/12/conserving-the-surtout-de-table-gilt-metalwork. / **5** Jessica Walthew et al., "Sharing Conservation Imaging Research with the Public," January 27, 2020.

EXPLORATIONS IN BLACK JEWELRY: LEGACY

BY SEBASTIAN GRANT



Betye Saar and Curtis Tann, 1951

Courtesy of the artist and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles, California
Photo: Bob Willoughby

LEGACY: A WORD FILLED WITH MANY CONCEPTS

and definitions, usually pertaining to objects or ideas carrying over from the past. The term also explores the metaphysical meditations on memories, creative achievements, and innovations of important figures. Yet history has the tendency to be told by its dominant figures, and legacy is no different. In Western society, dominated by a Eurocentric point of view, the accomplishments of non-white artists have been either ignored or excluded from historical narratives. As in other design fields, American art jewelry has recognized mostly white or European-based designers, while omitting the contributions of people of color, especially from African-American artists. As America's national conversation of race unfolds, it is important that jewelry historians finally explore the legacies of these Black artists and recognize those who played important roles in the development of modern jewelry making. In this first of four installments of *Explorations in Black Jewelry*, I introduce some of these artists from the mid-twentieth century into important conversations about the history of jewelry design and add to the growing scholarship.

When exploring the history of African-American jewelry artists and designers, one hears Art Smith often mentioned. Smith's modernist works have been featured in exhibitions at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, and the Brooklyn Museum. Smith combined creative artistry with his business acumen as a Black man in New York's Greenwich Village jewelry scene during a time when America was still plagued with Jim Crow–era beliefs. Despite Smith's acceptance into the art jewelry canon, similar levels of research and recognition have not been applied to other African-American jewelry artists who built their own successful careers around the same period.

VIEW

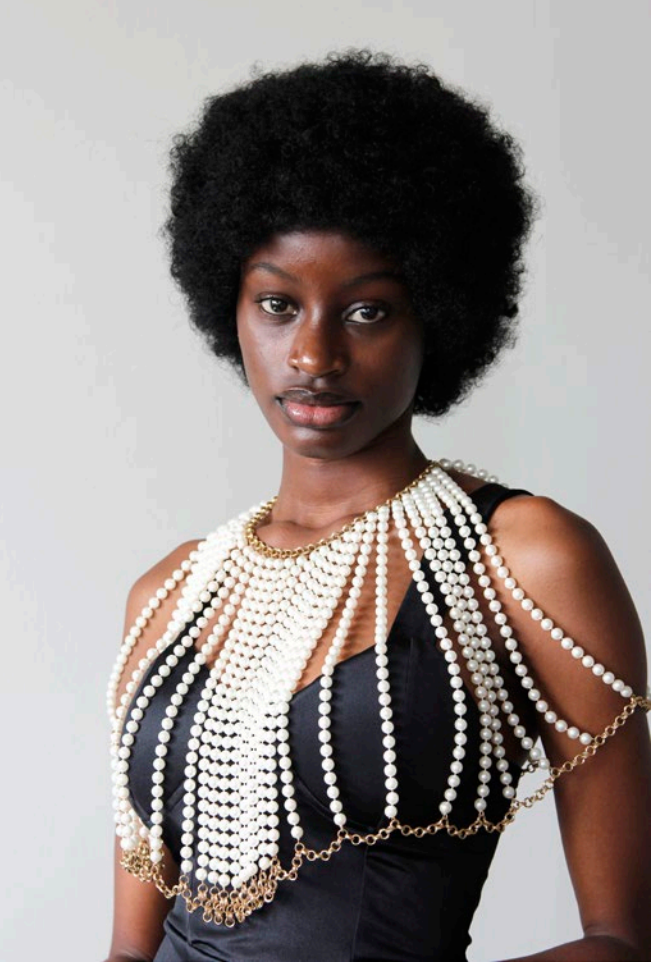
Curtis Tann
Two Enamel Plates, date unknown
Enamel on copper
Courtesy of Martin Tann

For instance, the legacy of Winifred Mason, who mentored Smith and whose business also flourished in Greenwich Village, has been largely overlooked.[1,2] Her geometric, African-influenced copper jewelry work landed on the cover of *Ebony* magazine (December 1946) and attracted patrons such as jazz great Billie Holiday.[3] How can we turn her story into a legacy as renowned as Smith's?

Some artists from this period are only gaining attention now. Curtis Tann played a pivotal role in the mid-century Black art scenes in Ohio and Los Angeles. Tann started as a theater actor at Karamu House in Cleveland, appearing in original productions by Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston.[4] He discovered his true passion working with enamel on copper in the Limoges technique and honed his skills under jeweler Thomas Usher.[5] After moving to Los Angeles in 1946 with only $10 in his pocket, Tann became a part of the burgeoning art scene in Pasadena, mingling with legendary African-American artists such as Charles White and Ruth G. Waddy, with whom he founded Eleven Artists Associated (later the Art West Association) to promote and support African-American artists. Additionally, Tann introduced contemporary artist Betye Saar (née Brown) into the Pasadena art scene through their collaboration, Brown and Tann, which originally specialized in enamel jewelry.[6] From 1952 to 1963, Tann was the lead enamel designer for Renoir of California and Matisse Ltd., where he created colorfully jeweled and whimsical brooches, necklaces, and earrings, all which captured gracious charm and exquisite technique.[7] In addition to his jewelry, Tann's influence extended into community education as one of the founding directors of the Watts Tower Arts Center from 1967 to 1973, which is still supporting the arts throughout the Pasadena community today.

Over the years, the world of fashion has provided an avenue for Black jewelry artists to build their legacy, using jewelry to make aesthetically bold statements. For example, Bill Smith elevated costume jewelry with his adventurous experimentation in the '60s and '70s. Smith, who originally intended to become a dancer, applied his passion for movement and performance to his jewelry after studying metalsmithing under Alma Eikerman at Indiana University in the early 1950s.[8] He had early success with his first company Smith St. Jacques (with his partner, the actor Raymond St. Jacques), then joined the costume jewelry company Richelieu as head designer in 1968.[9] Displayed in high fashion magazines like *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*, Smith's bold and beautiful pieces ranged from oversized coiled spring necklaces, to geometric golden bangles, and to full-body ornaments connected by strings of pearls. Smith received Swarovski's Designer of the Year award in 1969 and was the first Black designer to win the Coty award in 1970[10]. His jewelry was exhibited at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and his body ornaments were featured on the *Today Show* with Barbara Walters.[11] He worked with renowned photographer and designer Cecil Beaton in 1969 to produce costume jewelry for the Broadway show *Coco*, starring Katharine Hepburn.[12] Though he was immortalized on glossy magazine pages, his works worn by models and celebrities like Twiggy and Cher in the '60s, and designed for prominent companies such as Cartier, Omega Inc., and Hattie Carnegie in the late '70s and '80s, Bill Smith's name had faded to relative obscurity by the time of his death in 1989.[13] Yet, his pieces left a prominent legacy in the world of fashion during an age of social change.

As important as it is to secure one's own place in history, it is just as essential to help create that recognition for other artists. Evangeline (EJ) Montgomery created jewelry as an employee for Thomas Usher, who also trained Curtis Tann in enamel arts, until she pursued a curatorial career. During the Civil Rights Movement, Montgomery promoted artists of color in the United States Information Agency through the State Department, and as a consultant in Cultural and Ethnic Affairs at the Mills College Art Gallery in Oakland.[14] While at Mills in 1970, Montgomery curated *California Black Craftsmen: An Exhibition of Nineteen Black Craftsmen Living and Working in California*, the first major traveling exhibition of Black craft in America. Featured among its participants were jewelry artists such as Tann, Dale B. Davis, Doyle Lane, and Carole Ward Allen (who will be explored further in future *Explorations* columns). Montgomery's work was essential in introducing Black craft artists to a broader audience and preserving the moments that make Black jewelry recognizable today.



Bill Smith
Merème wearing *Body Ornament*, 2020
Photo: Aida Sulova
Image courtesy of Aida Sulova and The Jewelry Library

These artists are only the first in a conversation about many African-American artists who used jewelry as a way to express their culture, identity, and history to others, achieving varying levels of success. In their brave steps forward and against animosity and oppression, they tried their best to build a proud legacy in their creative works. Unfortunately, history has devoted little scholarship and collected little information on these individuals, so in this column we will continue to locate and delve into the rich stories of these designers and the work they created. Only then can we strengthen the legacy they deserve.

Sebastian Grant is a curator, art historian, and professor at Parsons School of Design in New York City. He currently works as collections manager of the Susan Grant Lewin Art Jewelry Collection.

1 Treadway Toomey Auctions, *African American Fine Art Auction* (Oak Park, IL: 2014), 95. / **2** Richard Dier, "Winifred Mason Finds Success in Custom Made Jewelry Shop," *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 13, 1946, 12. / **3** "Copper for Christmas," *Ebony*, December 1946, 19-20. / **4** Curtis Tann, "African-American Artists of Los Angeles: Curtis Tann," interview by Karen Anne Mason, UCLA Library Center for Oral History Research, October-December 1991, 35-37. / **5** Ibid., 39. / **6** Betye Saar, "African-American Artists of Los Angeles: Betye Saar," interview by Karen Anne Mason, UCLA Library Center for Oral History Research, 1990-1991, 62-63. / **7** Tann, viii. / **8** "A Personal Glimpse of Four Designers," *The Herald-News* (Passaic, NJ), September 29, 1970. / **9** Joann Harris, "His Pearls are Fashion Gems," *The Sun* (Baltimore, MD), November 16, 1969. / **10** The Coty American Fashion Critics Awards was an awards show that rewarded fashion designers from various fields from 1943 to 1984 / **11** Marian Christy, "Bill Smith Rocks the Fashion World," *The Courier-News* (Bridgewater, NJ), September 12, 1969. / **12** Opal Crockett, "Hoosier Bejewels Broadway's 'Coco,'" *The Indianapolis Star*, February 9, 1970. / **13** "Bill Smith–First Black Jewelry Designer to Win Prestigious Awards," *Gemexi*, https://www.gemexi.com/blog/jewelry/bill-smithfirst-black-jewelry-designer-to-win-prestigious-awards. / **14** "Evangeline 'EJ' Montgomery: Pioneer, Advocate, Artist & Curator," *Alex Cooper Auctioneers*, https://www.alexcooper.com/blog/evangeline-ej-montgomery-pioneer-advocate-artist-curator.

MULTIFARIOUS MATERIALS: KATHLEEN NOWAK TUCCI

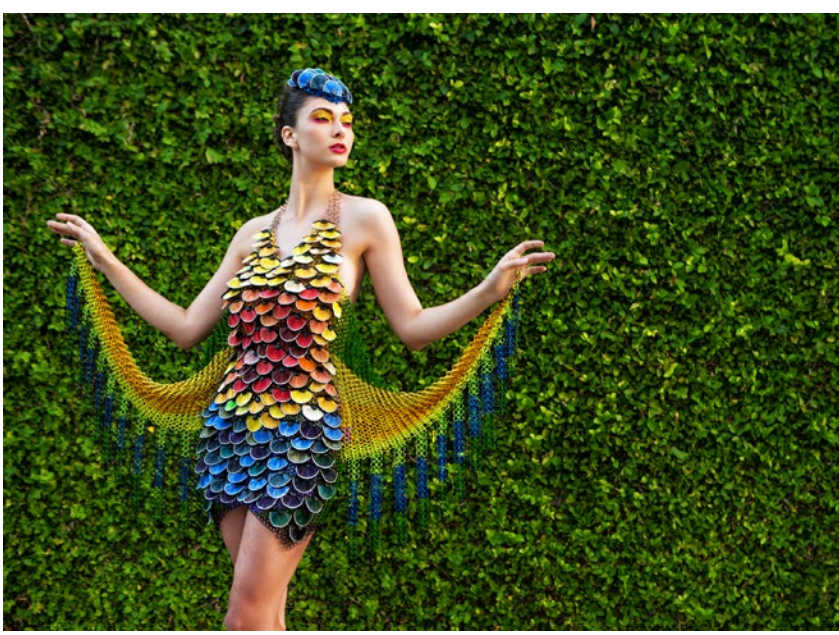
BY MATT LAMBERT

Secret Garden Necklace, 2016
Recycled bicycle and
motorcycle inner tubes
16 x 11 in.
Photo: Víctor Wolansky

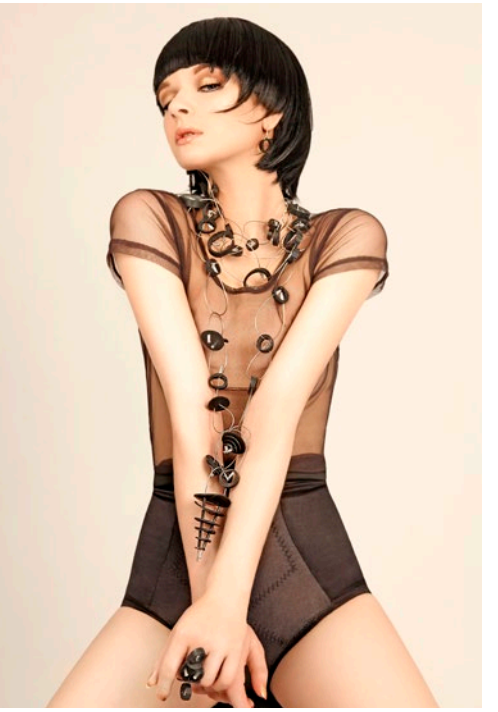
WHEN WORKING AT A BUSY FAIR, market, or gallery all day, you develop a special bond with the artists around you: sharing in small talk when it's slow; taking turns grabbing water and coffee; decompressing over dinner when everyone finally gets to sit down. It was in one of these situations that I was fortunate enough to meet Kathleen Nowak Tucci. Tucci is a person I am always happy to run into and I can be sure I will lose track of time when I do. She is a lifelong learner and a generous mentor sharing what has and has not worked in her career.

Tucci has worked in many artistic formats, mostly with ceramic. But the jewelry bug bit after a move to Alabama on the Florida border where Tucci now maintains a studio. She picked up her metalsmithing skills at Pensacola State University. "After taking the (available jewelry) classes for credit, I repeated Independent Study in Jewelry over and over," she says. "I have all the supplies, because when I work sometimes, I mix techniques. I still take courses in classes and workshops as much as I can in fields in which I might not ever work."[1]

These days, Tucci is often referred to as an eco-designer because she focuses on using recycled materials such as Nespresso® coffee capsules and used bicycle and motorcycle inner tubes. It is easy to see the value of the diverse training Tucci has pursued, as it provides a wide range of technical knowledge that aids her in figuring out the



Hummingbird Dress, 2016
(wings added 2018)
Recycled Nespresso® coffee capsules,
epoxy clay, aluminum jump rings
34 x 29 in.
Photo: Rick Schamberger



Selma Necklace, 2012
Recycled bicycle and motorcycle inner tubes, stainless brake cables
2½ x 45 in.
Photo: Janine Joffe

right process for each material in hand. Tucci sees her work as straddling the boundaries of craft and fashion, and refers to herself as "an artist who currently focuses on making jewelry out of many mediums, including recycled materials." This focus has led to many opportunities, including a partnership with Nespresso®. Tucci explains:

> I have made jewelry using recycled Nespresso® coffee capsules since 2012. In 2014, I based an entire collection on them, and an image of my work was used as the main image for a New York Fashion Week market show. The Nespresso® corporate headquarters for the US is located in New York City, so I did everything I could to get Nespresso® to notice; I even sent some jewelry to their offices. For years I tagged them in every Instagram post when I used their capsules in my work. Then in 2017, I received an email from a Nespresso® representative. They asked if I could make a large wall piece. I worked for months to make the 36-by-36-foot wall piece I named *Vivification*. It has now been displayed at many events including at the Tribeca Film Festival and the Forbes Awards in Beverly Hills... When I asked how they found out about me, they told me that the social media manager had submitted images of my pieces. All of that tagging worked![2]

Tucci's work has been featured in museum exhibitions and museum shops. She is no stranger to a fair or selling event, and is a wealth of knowledge when it comes to navigating fashion shows and talking with boutiques and online retailers, including Artful Home. After meeting the CEO Lisa Bayne at a 2011 Smithsonian Craft Show, Tucci began by showcasing just a few pieces with the ecommerce platform and it has evolved into an ongoing relationship. Artful Home has recently begun selling clothing, which creates context for Tucci's jewelry work when photographed on a model.

Tucci's work has been featured on the cover of *Vogue Italia* as part of a now-iconic series of images shot by Steven Meisel, inspired by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill in the Gulf Coast in 2010.[3] She is the recipient of the 2015 Saul Bell Design Award, and has placed multiple times in the competition's alternative materials category. Most recently, her work was seen on Lily Tomlin's character in the Netflix hit series *Grace and Frankie*.

Tucci's willingness to reach out, combined with an incessant drive to perfect mechanisms and ensure that new work is able to withstand everyday wear, are two reasons why she has made a name for herself in the jewelry world.

What I admire when speaking with Tucci is her enthusiasm to share, collaborate, and learn. She actively pays attention and is willing to be the first to engage in new experiences that may not have an immediate or obvious end goal. Kathleen Nowak Tucci's practice is an example of how method, material, and meaning are supported through and with jewelry. She exemplifies how eco-consciousness can also be aesthetically pleasing and challenges others to think about how they choose materials and processes.

Jessica Necklace, 2013
Extruded rubber and epoxy clay
11 x 17 in.

Jessica Corset, 2013
Extruded rubber and epoxy clay
15 x 30 in.

Photo: Janine Joffe

matt lambert is a non-binary, trans, multidisciplinary collaborator and co-conspirator working towards equity, inclusion, and reparation. They are a co-founder and facilitator of The Fulcrum Project and currently are a PhD student between Konstfack and University of Gothenburg in Sweden.

1 matt lambert and Kathleen Nowak Tucci. Personal interview, April 14, 2020. / **2** matt lambert and Kathleen Nowak Tucci. Personal email, April, 2021. / **3** This series of images is further discussed in a documentary on former editor of *Vogue Italia* Franca Sozzani. *Franca: Chaos and Creation*. Milano: Eagle Pictures, 2016.

ZOOM JEWELRY

WITH THE INCREASING accessibility of global events through virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom, Skype, and Google Meet, it is no surprise that the international jewelry community is showing up to online gatherings such as artist lectures, business meetings, workshops, studio visits, and conferences decked out in their favorite adornments.

At *Metalsmith*, we invited a handful of professionals in the contemporary jewelry field to share their go-to piece of Zoom-ready jewelry.

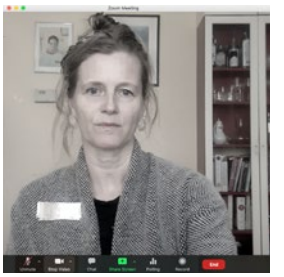
Felieke van der Leest
Pink Panther, 2020
Textile, silver, glass beads, music box
45 x 23 x 7½ cm
Photo: Eddo Hartmann

Felieke van der Leest, *jewelry artist:* "Hidden in the pink diamond is a music box with the 'Pink Panther' tune. Whenever there is an uncomfortable silence during a Zoom meeting I will turn the handle. I hope it will make people smile."

Jina Seo
Hip Bone #1 (brooch), 2020
Sterling silver, leather, acrylic sheet, thread
5 x 6 x 3 in.
Photo by the artist

Jina Seo, *artist and educator:* "*Hip Bone #1* represents the frustrations I had during the lockdown. As I sat on my couch awkwardly going through countless Zoom meetings, my hipbone ached all the time. My watch would tell me that it's time to stand up and move. I paced the living room in circles waiting for the next Zoom meeting. The pain sharpened. Was it a real pain or something just in my head? I do not know."

Katja Toporski
Dose of the Future 25, 2020
Silver, optical filter, reconstituted eggshell, acrylic
9 x 3 x 1½ cm
Photo courtesy of the artist

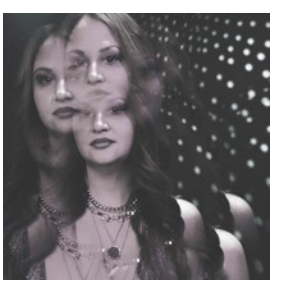


Katja Toporski, *jewelry artist, educator, writer, and former anesthesiologist:* "Just like participants on Zoom, this brooch keeps its true nature hidden and reveals its secrets only from certain angles. We carefully select what others can see of us in this digital environment: a lot of smoke and mirrors."

Curtis H. Arima, *associate professor and co-chair of the Jewelry and Metal Arts program at California College of the Arts:* "This piece was purchased on a trip to Tokyo in 2017 from Deux Poissons Gallery. The piece looks, moves, and feels so much like a freshly picked plant. The crochet yarn celebrates a time-honored craft, while remaining fresh with its unusual material use for jewelry. This piece sparks conversation and holds the memories of my trip."

JungJung
Untitled, 2017
Crochet cotton yarn, metal pin back
9 x 4 x 1 in.
Photo by the artist

Georgina Treviño
Male Tears, 2019
Silver, rhinestones
3 x 1 in.
Photo courtesy of the artist



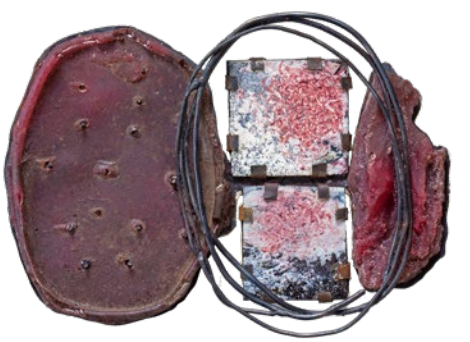
Viviana Langhoff, *fine jewelry designer and owner of Adornment + Theory in Chicago:* "I'm absolutely obsessed with Georgina's work! I have a lot of respect for how she is mixing street culture, high/low jewelry, Latino culture, and irony into her work. I love the edginess in her pieces and how I see parts of my own culture reflected in a contemporary way."

Karen Smith
Mammdjarra the Sacred, 2020
Sterling, fine silver,
14k gold foil
36 x 48 in.
Photo: James Knox

Karen Smith, *Founder and Executive Director of We Wield the Hammer, self-taught metal artist, and arts educator:* "This ceremonial necklace was conceived to adorn, honor and celebrate the BlackWomenSelf in ceremonies of marriage, rites of passage, transitions of all kinds."

Sarah Rachel Brown, *host and producer,* Perceived Value *podcast:* "A few months ago, I received an unexpected package from my sweet friend and fellow jeweler, Aran Galligan. Enclosed were these earrings and a note stating that she had recently purchased them through a fundraiser and that if there was someone who could pull off these XL earrings, it was me. Happy to prove her right."

June Cream
Suzette Earrings, 2018
Brass, silver,
clear powdercoat
4¾ x 2¾ in.
Photo: Linette Kielinksi



Lorena Lazard
In the Beginning 4 (brooch), 2019
Soil from the artist's garden,
iron, enamel, epoxy, pigments
67 x 92 x 10 mm
Photo: Paolo Gori

Lorena Lazard, *artist and educator, Coordinator of the Contemporary Jewelry Program at University Centro, Mexico City:* "What piece can I wear during a talk about my work to an audience that is not familiar with contemporary jewelry? What piece can help me convey my message? I hope this brooch is strong enough, deep enough and coherent enough to achieve my intention."

Lucy Sarneel
Good Vibrations (brooch), 2018
Zinc, acrylic paint, varnish, glitter paper
120 x 100 x 2 mm
Image courtesy of Gallery Marzee
Photo: Michiel Heffels

Chequita Nahar, *jeweler, head of program fine arts and design, Maastricht Institute of Arts:* "With its sparkling eyes this brooch attracts the eye of the viewer, giving good vibrations, inspiration and brightening up everyone's day when seeing it during these sometimes long meetings."

Ying-Hsiu Chen, *college lecturer, jewelry design instructor:* "Living near the sea since childhood has taught me to learn from nature, which is one of the sources of my inspiration. By observing natural objects, I obtain an understanding of the spirits they embody and integrate those characteristics into my art."

Ying-Hsiu Chen
Scenery in My Mind (brooch), 2018
Silver plated metal alloy, 18k gold plated metal alloy
10 x 6 x 4 cm (each)
Photo: Kai Liang

CALLING YOU IN: REFLECTIONS ON THE EQUITY GAP IN JEWELRY ACADEMIA

BY LESLIE D. BOYD

AMONG THE HARDSHIPS resulting from the global COVID-19 pandemic, subsequent school shutdowns, and social distancing mandates was the exacerbation and exposure of massive equity gaps in higher education. As an art professor at a public university, I witnessed this firsthand when lockdowns forced my classes online. There are various causes for such disparities, but socioeconomic standing and community support structures stand out most. Among the statistics available on K–12 schools on the Department of Education's website, "45 percent of high-poverty schools received less state and local funding than was typical for other schools in their district." With the sudden shift to remote learning, lack of access to a computer, internet, childcare, transportation, material goods, tools, and physical space became issues even for the most privileged students.[1]

Equitably delivering a jewelry education should include no-cost equipment, hardware, software, and internet availability for all students. Thinking of these resources as anything less than meeting a student's most basic needs suggests that only students from middle- to upper-class socioeconomic backgrounds deserve a formal education. Many school faculty and administrators are beginning to address how to solve such issues as they return to on-campus education, but such fixes must not distract from the need to address more pervasive inequities in these institutions. I posit that with the unavoidable shifts in academic paradigms that will come in a post-pandemic society, educators must consider how the systems that we rebuild will aim to dismantle these inequities. During this time of transition, we must examine how our curriculum, teaching methods, and the institutions we operate within are failing to serve students outside of the white, middle- to upper-class, able-bodied individuals for which most institutions of higher education in the US were constructed. This topic is enormous, and by no means do I believe it can be fully covered in a single article written by a white middle-class woman who has benefited vastly from unearned privilege within these spaces. The first step in addressing an issue is to identify it in all of its nuances, and I hope that this text will encourage other white educators and administrators to reflect critically on our role in upholding institutions of systemic racism, ableism, and oppression, so we might use our privilege to help build an inclusive and equitable field.

Doing this important work must include self-education so that

Artist Amy Solis in her studio, 2020

Photo courtesy of the artist

Amy Solis
Nameplate Hoop Earrings, 2020
Brass, copper, sterling silver
3 x 3 in.
Photo: Sara Ray

we might begin to understand the diverse identities, perspectives, passions, learning styles, and needs of our students. It is crucial that this understanding is built on close listening, genuine inquiry, and meaningful relationship building. Unconscious biases, assumptions, and stereotypes have a pervasive ability to manipulate one's understanding of the unique characteristics of each student and shift the way one engages with and treats them. Harm is most often caused through regularly occurring, passive, implicit biases in the form of *microaggressions*: subtle acts of bias towards a marginalized individual.

Although microaggressions can be intentional, they also happen unintentionally. Amy Solis is a queer, undocumented woman of color who studies jewelry at Long Beach City College in California. When speaking to hardships she has experienced when navigating academia, she highlights the impact of microaggressions: "If these paper cuts happen to you often, then it starts to be incredibly painful, and at a certain point it is hard to deal with each small instance. These experiences occurring when I re-entered academia brought back the idea of, What am I doing here? Why am I even trying to fit in? Why is my goal to be part of this platform that isn't welcoming to me?" Solis's account contextualizes just how harmful these slights can be. Within academia, they may invalidate students and reinforce a message that their identities are neither accepted nor valued. To abolish these negative habits, we need to first understand how they have developed and how to identify them. This requires self-reflection, identification, reconditioning, and lots of practice.

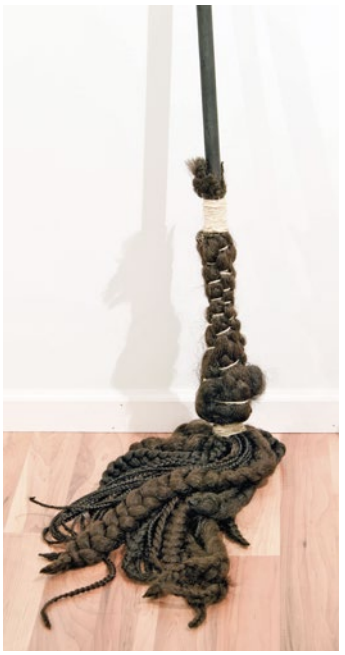
Marcelo Ferreira Gustafsson
Diaspora, 2018
Antique Edwardian mourning textiles, poems, antique archive cabinet
50 x 50 x 180 cm
Photo: Johan Lindberg

Jewelry programs within colleges and universities tend to be quite small, and students are often relegated to a single mentor in their studies. When exposing students to the historical and contemporary practices within the jewelry and metals field, it is that mentor's responsibility to ensure the resources are representative of a diverse range of artists, cultures, bodies, and perspectives, and not restricted to their own interests or expertise. There is a lot of unlearning to do in this arena, as many current educators' own education did not reflect these principles, and omission of such representation can be a detrimental action that invalidates the passions, goals, and lived experience of our students. Marcelo Ferreira Gustafsson, who studied jewelry at Konstfack University of Arts, Craft, and Design in

Marcelo Ferreira Gustafsson

Self Portrait, 2021
Photo courtesy of the artist

Marcelo Ferreira Gustafsson
Opisthotonus, 2018
Antique Edwardian mourning textiles, roots, branches, glass beads, concrete
Photo: Johan Lindberg



Shani Richards
#2 from the Hanging Cabinet Series, 2015
Hair, burnt wood, rope
84 x 5 in.
Photo by the artist

Sweden and now works as an educator, spoke with me about his experience as a person of color entering an MFA program where there were only four non-white people (including students and staff) in the entire craft department. "It was very much a struggle for me to find my place as a student," Gustafsson says. "When I graduated, I totally stopped making jewelry. I felt like the discourse in the jewelry field was really lacking, especially in terms of representation. Why do I not feel like I am a part of this contemporary craft scene, and what needs to be in dialogue in order to make more people feel a sense of place?"[2]

No one's identities or circumstances should prohibit them from accessing or feeling included in the education they desire.[3] Additionally, when marginalized individuals are systemically excluded from spaces of higher education, then those spaces miss out on entire perspectives, experiences, and embodied knowledge.[4] In a panel discussion during the College Art Association conference in 2016 entitled *'The Black Craftsman Situation': A Critical Conversation About Race and Craft*, artist, craftswoman, and educator Sonya Clark noted that educators must "revisit how blinding your privilege has been, and then let's figure out how to get these notions of other cultures and other ways of thinking and being, and making, and evaluating, and critiquing into the classroom."[5]

In her article "Flashpoints of Artist Identity Formation" in *Art Education*, Sarah Travis, Assistant Professor of Art Education at the University of Illinois, acknowledges the important role of an instructor to "support students in their efforts to create previously unimaginable futures through the arts."[6] People may come to study jewelry with varied career and creative aspirations, all of which are valid. Our curriculum content and teaching methods should encourage highly individualized support while also providing our students with the necessary and pragmatic resources to support themselves outside of the

EXPANDED DEFINITIONS + FURTHER RESOURCES

Cultural humility
Cultural humility starts with an awareness of the unique qualities of one's own cultural identity and those of other individuals or communities. It requires an individual to possess the skills and motivation to hold cross-cultural dialogue, free from implicit and explicit bias. Paramount to this concept is the understanding that one will never be able to truly know the lived experiences of another individual and accepting those individuals' truths when they recount their experiences to us. It is important to note that this concept is evolving. Although this humility can signal an understanding of a power imbalance, it can also be applied and/or used by individuals of a dominant culture to maintain dominance or control (either knowingly or unknowingly).

Equity gap
An equity gap is a disparity in achievement aligned with a demographic such as race, ethnicity, gender, class, or disability. These gaps are generally linked to a resource disparity such as funding, quality educators, pre-K programs, food, etc. Equity gaps in K–12 schooling influence post-secondary school enrollment and retention.

Implicit bias
Implicit biases are automatic unconscious attitudes, opinions, and stereotypes that inform our interactions and decision-making process. These can be both positive and negative and are informed by identities, upbringing, media consumption, and all other aspects of our lived experiences. No individual is without implicit biases. It is important to regularly engage in self-reflection and questioning to process biases out of our unconscious mind and ensure that they do not cause harm.

Microaggressions
Microaggressions are subtle acts of bias towards a marginalized individual. These can be both intentional and unintentional. Microaggressions can be harmful in a singular occurrence, but their ability to accumulate due to their subtle nature can create traumatic or negative environments for the individual at the receiving end.

Privilege
Privileges are the unearned benefits that someone possesses due to an identity that they belong to such as gender or race. For example, White privilege is the benefit that White individuals hold simply due to the color of their skin. These include benefits such as the ability to move throughout life without fear of racist rhetoric being used against you, whether explicitly or implicitly. I highly recommend reading the short essay *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* by Peggy McIntosh to achieve a deeper understanding of this concept.

Reading and resources for inclusive teaching:
- https://www.current-obsession.com/decolonise-contemporary-jewellery/
- https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/InclusiveTeachingStrategies
- https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/ClassClimates
- https://psychology.umbc.edu/files/2016/10/White-Privilege_McIntosh-1989.pdf

Shani Richards
Branded, 2016
Steel, jeans, paint
36 x 6 x 18 in.
Photo by the artist

academy. While it is essential to encourage students to dream to their fullest potential as artists, we must also provide practical training, post-graduation mentorship, and connections to industry resources. This level of support is necessary for all of our students to thrive post-graduation, especially those who may not have the social or financial safety net of their more privileged peers.

As you reflect on these ideas, I urge you to consider the flexibility and grace that came to be a silver lining of the pandemic semesters of teaching, and should be kept as we continue forward from this moment. For our efforts to have a real impact, we must visualize and aspire toward an inclusive jewelry and metalsmithing community, and move swiftly into action to make it a reality. This will undoubtedly be both difficult and uncomfortable, challenging our privileges in the very system that has likely led to our success. But it is only through these challenges that we can grow. We must look at our course outlines and learning objectives, take the opportunity to update or re-rewrite them, and see how and where variation and flexibility in course contents, structure, and delivery can be implemented. Ask yourself: How do you define value or importance? What structures do these definitions uphold and what individuals do they favor?[7]

There is little doubt that once academic institutions fully resume in-person classes, classrooms will look a little different. I hope that in this time of great change, we don't lose sight of these efforts. A more inclusive, diverse, accessible field is possible, but we need to fight for it. The equity gap certainly does not begin in higher education, and it doesn't end there either. Museums, gallerists, curators, and adjacent content creators in our field and beyond all have a role to play. As the prolific artist Joyce Scott stated in *The Black Craftsman Situation* panel discussion: if you feel that you are already doing this work, then "get close to a person that's not doing it...Help people with what could be perceived as an academic shortcoming. It really is all of us working with each other... that's how change happens."[8] We must hold one another accountable.

As we shift to living in a post-pandemic society, let's not just get back to normal. We can, and should, do better than that.

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1 "Inclusion, Equity, and Access While Teaching Remotely," Rice University Center for Teaching Excellency, accessed January 4, 202, https://cte.rice.edu/blogarchive/2020/3/13/inclusion-equity-and-access-while-teaching-remotely. / **2** Marcelo Ferreira Gustafsson, virtual conversation with the author, December 2020. / **3** It is worth noting that higher education is not the right path for everyone and that there are an increasing variety of alternative models for jewelry education. These facts do not negate the need for accessible and equitable higher education for those who would like to pursue this path. / **4** Byron P. White, "Beyond a Deficit View," Inside Higher Ed, accessed January 4, 2021, https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2016/04/19/importance-viewing-minority-low-income-and-first-generation-students-assets-essay. / **5** Sonya Clark, Wesley Clark, Bibiana Obler, Mary Savig, Joyce J. Scott, and Namita Gupta Wiggers, "The Black Craftsman Situation: A Critical Conversation about Race and Craft," in *The New Politics of the Handmade: Craft, Art and Design* (London, England: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020), 261-262. / **6** Sarah Travis, "Flashpoints of Artist Identity Formation," *Art Education*, 73:5 (2020): 16-25, https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2020.1781438. / **7** Jillian Hogan, Diane Jaquith, and Lauren Gould, "Shifting Perceptions of Quality in Art Education," *Art Education*, 73:4 (2020): 8-13, https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2020.1746161. / **8** Sonya Clark et al, "The Black Craftsman Situation: A Critical Conversation about Race and Craft," 263.

EMBRACING CONTRADICTIONS

BY REBECCA McNAMARA

Joyce J. Scott
The Double Cross, from the *Jonestown Massacre* series, 1980
Beads, photos, pins, bones, copper, wood
9½ x 5¼ x 1½ in.
Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, Oklahoma
Museum purchase, 1991.21.3
© Joyce J. Scott
© Richard Mawdsley Digital Image
© 2020 Museum Associates/LACMA.

THE 1960s AND 1970s in the United States was an era of great social change: marches and protests for civil rights and women's rights; anti-capitalist and antiwar rhetoric; self-discovery and the search for alternative ways of living—themes that feel deeply familiar sixty years later. And as is true today, jewelers of that era observed and critiqued events and issues through boundary-pushing adornments. A birth control necklace by Merrily Tompkins, a pendant iconizing comic-strip heroes by J. Fred Woell, a silver Wonder Woman neckpiece with pearl and smoky quartz accents by Richard Mawdsley, and a squash blossom–inspired necklace of rifle shells by Ken Cory are some of the wide-ranging examples found in the new release *In Flux: American Jewelry and the Counterculture*.

In Flux: American Jewelry and the Counterculture
By Susan Cummins, Damian Skinner, and Cindi Strauss
Stuttgart: arnoldsche, 2020
184 pp, 126 illustrations, $50

Book cover image:
J. Fred Woell
The Good Guys, 1966
Wood, steel, copper, plastic, sterling silver, found objects
4 in. diameter
Museum of Arts and Design, New York, 1977.2.102
© Estate of Fred Woell
Photo: John Bigelow Taylor

Although the American counterculture has been examined in myriad ways, *In Flux* demonstrates that there remain new avenues to understanding not just the movement, but the people who lived it. It is deeply rewarding to explore this time (approximately 1965 to 1980, as the new post–World War II studio craft movement flourished) and place (mostly key centers for metalsmithing like Philadelphia; the San Francisco Bay Area; Rochester, New York; and New York City) through innovative, creative art jewelry. It is further rewarding to see the book's authors embrace the contradictions and complications of the era and its makers, expanding a topic outward rather than fixing parameters.

Note that this book is about the *relationship* between studio jewelry and the counterculture, not exclusively on *counterculture jewelry*, and the authors take a multifaceted approach to define that association. Questions posed in the introductory essay include: "What new understandings become possible when American jewelry and the counterculture become the focus of research? Were American jewelers listening to the news and joining protests, supporting causes, and referring to contemporary events in their work? Were they armchair travelers jumping on an aesthetic bandwagon? Did they ignore political and cultural struggles in favor of materials and techniques? Was the decision to make craft itself a political or social response to the dramatic times in which American jewelers lived and worked?"[1] Although certain themes recur—a prioritization of handcraftsmanship, creativity, and innovation over the intrinsic value and preciousness of materials; political overtones (whether intentional or interpreted as such); and a search, through making, for alternate lifestyles—the answers repeatedly reside somewhere in the middle: *yes, but* or *only sometimes* or *probably not, but maybe*. Some of the jewelers discussed were active protesters; some used their work to speak for their views; some subscribed to progressive ideologies but didn't otherwise participate in countercultural movements; some claimed an apolitical stance while their work offered a different story.

Six main chapters are organized around loosely defined, overlapping themes, with dozens of case-study portraits of select studio jewelers. Those featured in the greatest depth include Woell, Don Tompkins, Cory, Mawdsley, Merrily Tompkins, and Joyce J. Scott. Succinct summaries of key political and cultural moments contextualize artists and their work into more well-known political, cultural, and craft histories, lending accessibility and easy reading. Key topics include the use of unusual

or innovative materials and techniques, like found objects and assemblage; specific styles, like Funk; national events, including the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr.; appropriated Native American aesthetics; the environment; capitalism and commercialism; and body politics and civil rights. Color and black-and-white archival photographs are skillfully interspersed throughout in a design with typographical nods to the era by Benjamin Kivikoski and Philipp Staege of Bureau Progressiv. Period photographs of makers, craft-ins, workshops, exhibitions, and other events are a welcome addition, further reminding us that these works were not created in voids—conceptual, visual, or otherwise.

Thoroughly researched, *In Flux* presents this complicated history using interviews with more than forty studio craft artists active in the 1960s and 1970s and substantial archival material including *Craft Horizons* (now *American Craft*), exhibition pamphlets, catalogs, and reviews; unpublished letters and texts; and more recent monographs and catalogs. Regular references to the people, organizations, and programs that provided the groundwork for crafting this history are much appreciated: we learn about teachers; emergent college and university metalsmithing programs; grassroots programs like Summervail; books; fairs; professional organizations like the American Craft Council (ACC) and the Society of North American Goldsmiths (SNAG, the organization that publishes this magazine); exhibitions, especially those at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts (now the Museum of Arts and Design) or organized by SNAG; and more. However, given references to some of these organizations' conservatism, including SNAG's, that reliance is at times surprising.

There is also, unfortunately, gender and racial unevenness. Of the thirty-eight artists whose work is illustrated, twenty-five are men (or male collectives), and thirteen are women; only a few are non-white. But in 1972, *Craft Horizons* was claiming equal coverage of the work of men and women.[2] Why did that not translate here? The racial disparity is acknowledged briefly, if inadequately, and while some programs and galleries outside of these prominent organizations are discussed, I am curious to know what outstanding work other women and jewelers of color were creating in relation to countercultural movements. I similarly longed for a deeper interrogation of the appropriation of Native American aesthetics, prevalent in the counterculture and discussed here only in passing moments and from the viewpoint of white artists. Where are the examples of innovative jewelry that was being made and sold by Native Americans, whether or not it was recognized in key exhibitions and magazines? I am eager for deeper interrogations of these issues and questions in all survey books generally. An epilogue-like "Further Reading" essay and extensive endnotes provide excellent starting points for endeavoring on more scholarship as we continue to satisfy a more complete picture of twentieth-century studio craft history.

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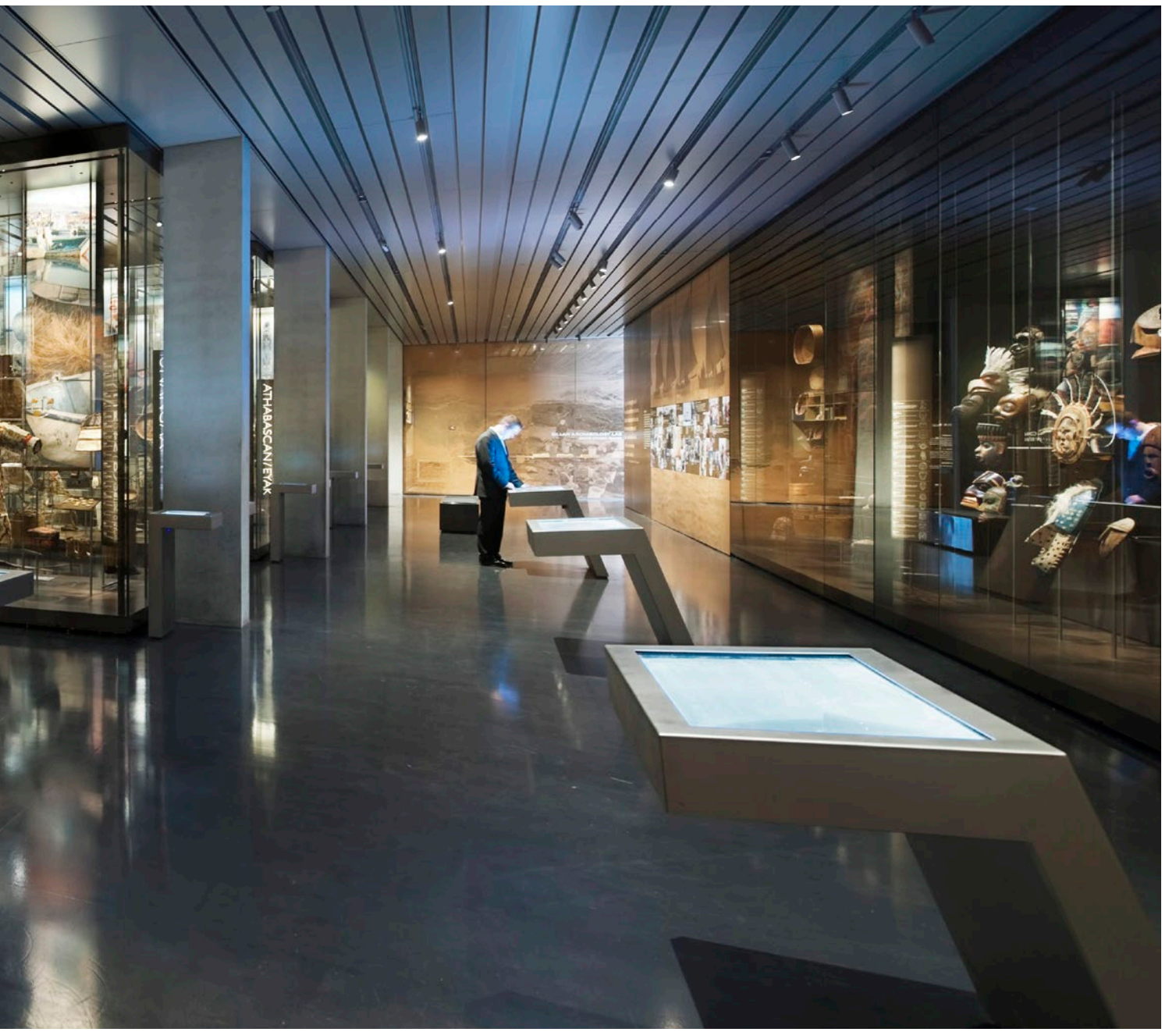
1 Cummins, Skinner, Strauss, *In Flux*, 10. / **2** Ibid., 117.

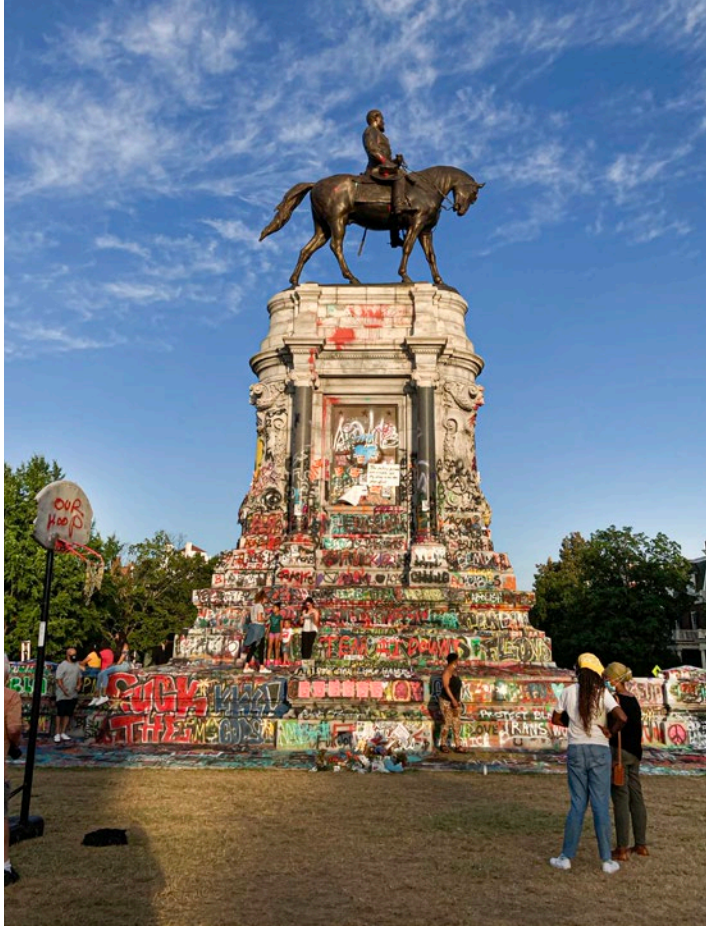
Nancy Worden
Initiation (necklace), 1980
Silver, rhodonite, copper, pills set in epoxy, hair curlers
12¾ x 10¼ x 1 in.
Tacoma Art Museum, gift of the artist, 1999.5 A-B
© Beverly Cory
Photo: Doug Yaple

Difficult Adornment



Recontextualizing Appropriative Adornment through Display

By Rebecca Schena



Lee Monument at Marcus-David Peters Circle, Richmond, VA. Reclaimed by the public through inscription and graffiti during the 2020 protests against the murder of George Floyd.

Photo: Brian Patterson

Previous spread:
Gallery view of *Living Our Cultures, Sharing Our Heritage: The First Peoples of Alaska, Anchorage Museum*. Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center at the Anchorage Museum

Photo: Chuck Choi

As Confederate monuments lie strewn about the pavement in cities across the United States, and the country contends with its deep history of colonialism, racism, homophobia, and misogyny...

...a similar reckoning is beginning to occur within jewelry.

Exhibitions such as the Museum of Art and Design's *La Frontera* (2018) aimed to open discourse around immigration, while *Slippery and Subversive* during the 2020 Material Topics Symposium at East Carolina University centered the perspectives of queer jewelers. Panels on cultural representation and intersectionality in jewelry have been well attended during international jewelry events, and an open letter from a coalition of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) jewelers demanding anti-racist efforts from the jewelry industry circulated widely online in the summer of 2020.[1]

As we begin to critically self-evaluate, the craft community is recognizing the ways that our display traditions fail to acknowledge the harms done by and within our community through cultural appropriation and unethical practices. But what do we do with these objects?

In this article, I provide some recommendations for how culturally appropriative adornments—and the unethical hierarchies we place them in—can be recontextualized through display and utilized as educational objects while minimizing harm to affected communities. I have drawn from established methods for recontextualizing objects that embody "difficult knowledge."[2] Still, as a white cisgender woman, I do not pretend to understand the intergenerational trauma of cultural theft and appropriation, nor provide concrete solutions for dealing with harmful artworks and painful objects. These are merely proposals.

Why the Display of Adornment Matters

Adornment plays a central role in the process of identification, through which we situate ourselves in the world and in relation to others. By bridging the inner, personal self and the outer, social self, adornment facilitates identification with others, promotes

communication, and places the wearer within "immediate, community, and [...] global contexts."[3] Exhibitions that neglect to consider the vital role adornment plays in constructing and interpreting our relationships can perpetuate systems of capitalism, nationalism, heteronormativity, misogyny, and white supremacy.

In the art museum, many contemporary adornment exhibitions derive their syntax, organization, and stark backdrops from the modernist "white cube," designed to objectively present artworks as aesthetic achievements to be marveled at free from the constraints of context.[4] The Danner Rotunda at the Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich displays one of the largest collections of contemporary jewelry in Europe in sparsely populated, minimal display cases. Despite employing a rotating schedule of curators, the pieces are again and again framed "objectively" as aesthetic phenomena, impenetrable to the uninitiated viewer of contemporary jewelry.

The impossibility of objective framing has been accepted in the museum world for years and is a given for BIPOC, women, and/or LGBTQI+ artists, who have rarely been permitted to present their work separate from their biography. Yet, the Metropolitan Museum continues to exhibit its collection of objects from "Africa, Oceania, and the Americas" in baffling displays somewhere between the white cube and a natural history museum, in an attempt to maintain objectivity.[5]

In the natural history museum, adornment is often displayed chronologically, geographically, or typologically.[6] Superficially, these decisions seem logical, but displaying material culture in this way can reinforce the belief that objects we find familiar are superior to those we find unfamiliar. Displays that attempt to draw ethical conclusions about the "progress of mankind" through display can reinforce this gut reaction, validating the belief that the modern is better than the ancient and that objects made by "Us" are better than objects made by "Them."[7]

In addition, constructing displays with only one category of viewer in mind can adversely affect those whose perspectives are not taken into account. One such gut-wrenching example can be found in Matthew Shenoda's account of viewing the mummified body of a five-year-old in a Chicago museum labeled "purchased in Egypt in 1895."[8] A poet and son of Egyptian immigrants to the US, Shenoda recounts the difficulty of concealing his grief and anger from his four-year-old daughter standing next to him.

Although the white cube may be an appropriate catch-all display for formalist art, and chronological displays may have their place, thoughtlessly applying such display techniques to appropriative jewelry lends legitimacy to harmful practices. The field of contemporary jewelry is not lacking in innovative, exciting displays. Curators have fashioned visually spectacular shows in recent years, from the iridescent walls of MAD's *Non-Stick Nostalgia* (2019) to the Met's high-budget *Heavenly Bodies* (2018). Yet, when it comes to confronting the evidence of the jewelry field's unethical practices, we fall back on tired display techniques, hoping that these familiar tropes will provide a respite from our discomfort.

Installation view of *Slippery and Subversive*, Wellington B. Grey Gallery, School of Art and Design, East Carolina State University, January 6–26, 2020. Curated by Adam Atkinson and Everett Hoffman

Photo: Everett Hoffman

Defining "Culturally Appropriative" Adornment

In my opinion, one of the most prevalent unethical practices within jewelry is cultural appropriation. Briahna Joy Gray's 2017 article "The Question of Cultural Appropriation" in *Current Affairs* provides two clear characteristics of culturally appropriative work. First, the objects borrow stylistic elements from a culture that is not the artist's own and, in doing so, demonstrate a lack of respect for the culture being taken from. Second, the artist profits from making such objects, leading to economic exploitation of those being appropriated and social prioritization of the appropriating artist. In a virtual panel discussion about cultural appropriation in craft, organized by SUNY New Paltz (2020), the panelists defined appropriation similarly.[9] Cultural appropriation, they noted, is not the exclusive problem of corporations: it is up to *us as artists* to promote ethical practices.

When visiting a jewelry exhibition at a New York City university in 2019, I was horrified to find that just six feet from a sign declaring that "People of color, immigrants, refugees, Muslims, women, LGBTQ matter to us" was a display case containing fetishized "tribal" adornments surrounded by additional "tribal props"—horned animal skulls, bones, sticks—to mimic the cluttered *wunderkammer* of centuries past.[10] Certainly not all of the artist's work could be considered appropriative. However, when a white artist creates jewelry that imitates Indigenous American and vague "tribal, ethnic" designs and exhibits them in a display that proudly reflects "Natural History and Metropolitan Museums," it is thoughtless at best and exploitative at worst.[11]

Two views of *El Ojo que Llora (The Eye that Cries)*, a sculpture by Lika Mutal commemorating the 70,000 victims of violence by the government and guerilla groups in Lima, Peru.

Photos: Cynthia E. Milton

In citing this display as an example, I do not intend to imply that this artist is the only one guilty of appropriation. One can find countless examples of white artists making breastplates based on Indigenous American designs or selling crystal jewelry based on spiritual traditions that are not theirs to profit from. Appropriation is practically the bedrock of contemporary jewelry, making the question of what to do with these objects all the more pressing.

What Do We Do with These Objects?

There are many strong arguments for the complete removal of problematic adornment objects from gallery contexts. Displaying these works—especially in traditional frameworks—has the potential to perpetuate harm by legitimizing the superiority of the familiar and lending credibility to victimizers, paying them in the process.[12] In writing this piece, I have, myself, considered and reconsidered the legitimacy of providing *any* space for these objects.

However, simply removing appropriative adornment from galleries and museums allows us to ignore it in the field—as the art jewelry community has done for decades. If we are not encouraged to confront our problems, it is easy to pretend that no one was hurt, no objects were stolen, no cultures were exploited, no one was silenced. In concealing harmful objects, we often conceal those who are harmed by them.

It is vital to learn about our history so we do not repeat it. I argue that we must continue engaging with these inherited objects, lest they become "tools for forgetting."[13] There is no such thing as a clean slate on stolen land.

Recontextualization Through Display

I see a possible resolution in the form of recontextualization—the exhibition of adornment in displays that provide transparent, multivocal object histories through exhibition organization, labeling, personal accounts, and imagery. To convey the embodied biography of each object, exhibitions could include information on who created it; how it was inspired, designed, and created; how it entered the museum's collection; and how it was previously displayed.

In theorizing how to publicly display pain-steeped objects, the authors of *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent Pasts in Public Places* apply Deborah Britzman's concept of "difficult knowledge," which they define as "knowledge that does not fit" within our existing, reassuring notions that we are "innocent." War photography, racist caricatures, memorials, and stolen sacred items are all examples.

Re-framing appropriative adornment as "difficult adornment" can help us make sense of what it means to properly care for it. We can look at how the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia reframes racist objects as tools for learning, or how Peru's *El Ojo que Llora* (*The Eye that Cries*) memorial serves as a site of cyclical public reckoning. Reflexive destruction may not provide all of the answers, but neither will reflexive conservation.

Additionally, when exhibiting difficult adornment, the museum's responsibility to the community being harmed could be considered analogous to its responsibility to "stakeholders" or a "source community"—a term used primarily to describe Indigenous communities whose material culture is exhibited.[14]

To demonstrate what such a display could look like, I would like to provide a few examples of exhibitions that have recontextualized objects of difficult knowledge for education, healing, and growth. While some of these exhibitions do not deal exclusively with adornment, their approaches can apply to displaying jewelry.

Recontextualization in Action

Living Our Cultures, Sharing Our Heritage: The First Peoples of Alaska is a permanent exhibition at the Anchorage Museum in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution, which has loaned more than 600 objects. Designed

> *If we are not encouraged to confront our problems, it is easy to pretend that no one was hurt, no objects were stolen, no cultures were exploited, no one was silenced. In concealing harmful objects, we often conceal those who are harmed by them.*

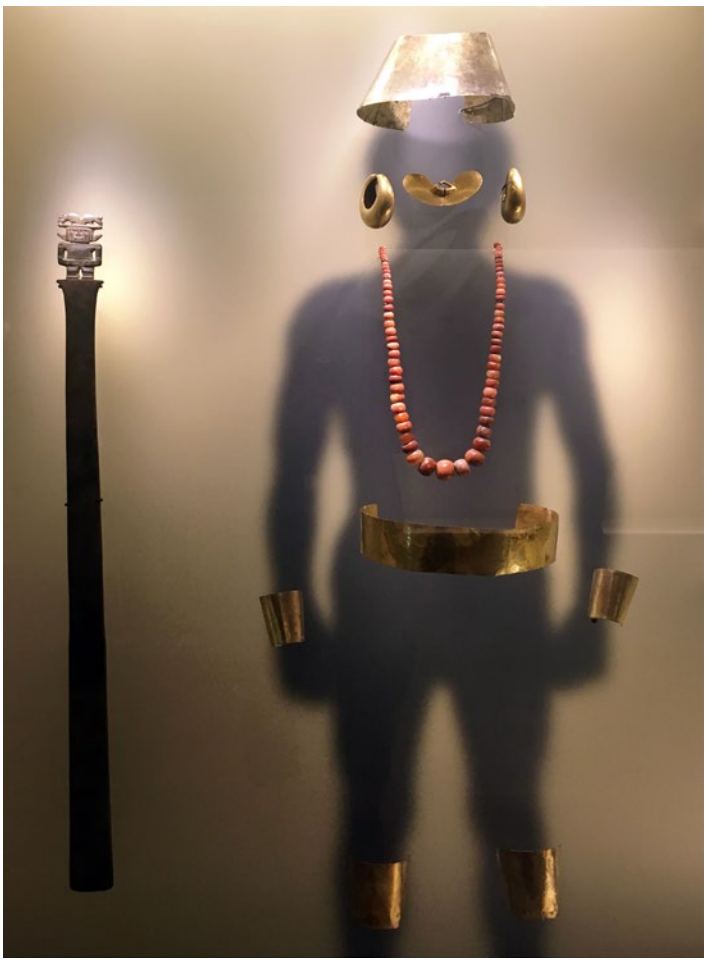
over several years, the exhibition seeks to contextualize Indigenous Alaskan cultural objects, art, and technology to educate Native and non-Native communities. Acknowledging the violence of colonization but primarily celebrating Indigenous resilience and ingenuity, it provides a strong example of thoughtful interpretation, interrelation, and education through display.

All of the interpretation in the exhibition was undertaken by, or created in partnership with, Native Alaskan elders, educators, and artists who provided texts describing the objects' uses, videotaped accounts of experiences with similar objects, and contextualized photographs. These interpretations take the forms of large photo banners, discussions translated into Iñupiaq and English, and touchscreens with videos and interactive 3D models.

The exhibition is organized geographically, moving from northern to southern Alaska but displaying objects from communities throughout the region without hierarchy. Rows of freestanding glass display cases allow viewers to see layers of objects and photographic banners from any position in the exhibition space. Objects created by different communities can, therefore, be interrelated: a patchwork of past objects and present interpretations melded together yet composed of distinct voices.

This display approach could be adapted to difficult adornment by prioritizing the source community's perspectives to move away from talking *at* or *for* the community, towards speaking *with* them.[15] Such an exhibition should strive not for objectivity, but intersubjectivity.[16] In the case of adornment, this could also include non-objectifying images of the adornments being worn.

One can look to the Museo del Oro in Bogotá, Colombia, as a shining example of embodying ancient jewelry in a sleek, non-objectifying manner. The museum utilizes simple shadowed silhouettes to demonstrate how the jewels would have been worn, immediately relating the objects to the body. These silhouettes remind the viewer of the history—the Spanish colonization of the Americas—that has removed these adornments from their original creators.



Wall display showing placement of wearable objects on the body in *La Gente Y El Oro (The People and Gold)* exhibit, El Museo del Oro, Bogotá, Colombia

Photo: Rebekah Frank

In his Art Jewelry Live virtual lecture (February 25, 2021) entitled "Collecting Other Worlds: History, Politics and Heritage at the Gold Museum," Héctor García-Botero, curator of archaeology and ethnography at the Museo del Oro, spoke to the importance of connecting the repair practices of ancient Indigenous communities to the social and political fractures of our current nations. Unlike many contemporary repair practices that aim to be undetectable, Pre-Columbian Zenú goldsmiths often repaired their incomplete filigree castings with evident interventions such as hammering, displacement, and the addition of material. Such repairs were made with continuity in mind: "The mark of the repair shows that damage can be overcome, but the scar [reminds] us of its unavoidable presence and future occurrence." Using infographics and comparative displays to highlight the ways we attempt to mend the damage done *to* and *by* objects, as the Museo del Oro did in their 2018 exhibition *¿Esto tiene arreglo?* (*"Can this be fixed?"*), could assist in transformative justice.

Appropriation is practically the bedrock of contemporary jewelry, making the question of what to do with these objects all the more pressing.

Another example can be found in *Connecting Cultures: A World in Brooklyn*, on display at the Brooklyn Museum from 2012 to 2016. This exhibition redisplayed objects from the museum's permanent collections with an emphasis on transparency and the reimagination of typological display. In contrast with the moralizing organizational systems used in anthropological museums, *Connecting Cultures* aimed to foster dialogue between a variety of objects in from different cultures and time periods. Clear and concise accompanying texts encouraged visitors to find their own relationships. The introductory text mentioned the curators by name, taking a stance against the authorless exhibition-writing that promotes the art museum as a seamless monolith with the authority to construct hierarchies. An entire wall was devoted to the display of pitchers of various origins: valued equally by a non-hierarchical display that lacked any grand narrative beyond our shared humanity.

A final, jewelry-specific example can be found in *Past is Present: Revival Jewelry* at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in 2017–2018. Although the exhibition did not comment on cultural appropriation specifically, it touched on issues surrounding archeology, ownership, and the role of "borrowed" jewelry styles in service of nationalism. In my conversation with exhibition curator Dr. Emily Stoehrer, she spoke to the importance of acknowledging the multilayered nature of each object's history. The stories of objects are unfixed: we recontextualize them each time we study them, like a memory that is altered by the very act of remembering it.

Caveats to Recontextualization

In proposing educational recontextualization over the complete removal of difficult adornment from galleries and museums, I am aware that there is a potential for retraumatization. No object created within systems of exploitation can be rendered fully inert through clever display techniques. No amount of curation or new museological theory can fully assuage the pain. Thus, I would like to conclude with a few caveats to recontextualization and acknowledge that no model is universally applicable.

First, recontextualizing displays of appropriative adornment objects should never take precedence over the *considered* and *respectful* display of objects created by the community whose works have been appropriated. When resources are limited, especially in the case of micromuseums, works by artists of marginalized identities should be prioritized over recontextualizing problematic work.[17]

Second, modifying display techniques does not excuse institutions from their duty to adequately support all of their workers, especially those who provide lived expertise. If museums intend to include the voices of marginalized groups, they must pay their employees fairly and include them within governing bodies.[18]

Finally, redisplay of difficult adornment made by living artists should only be carried out if the living artist receives no monetary benefit from the redisplaying of their work and the artist has made legitimate attempts to amend the harm they caused.[19] Since some artists may be tempted to use such an exhibition to avoid accountability, recontextualization may be more effective when undertaken with the work of non-living artists.

With these caveats in mind, I hope that recontextualization can provide a potential method of dealing with the difficult adornments that haunt our institutions. We must minimize the harmful potential of these objects in a way that prevents amnesia, transforming them from "celebratory monuments" of pain to "objective evidence" of wrongdoing.[20]

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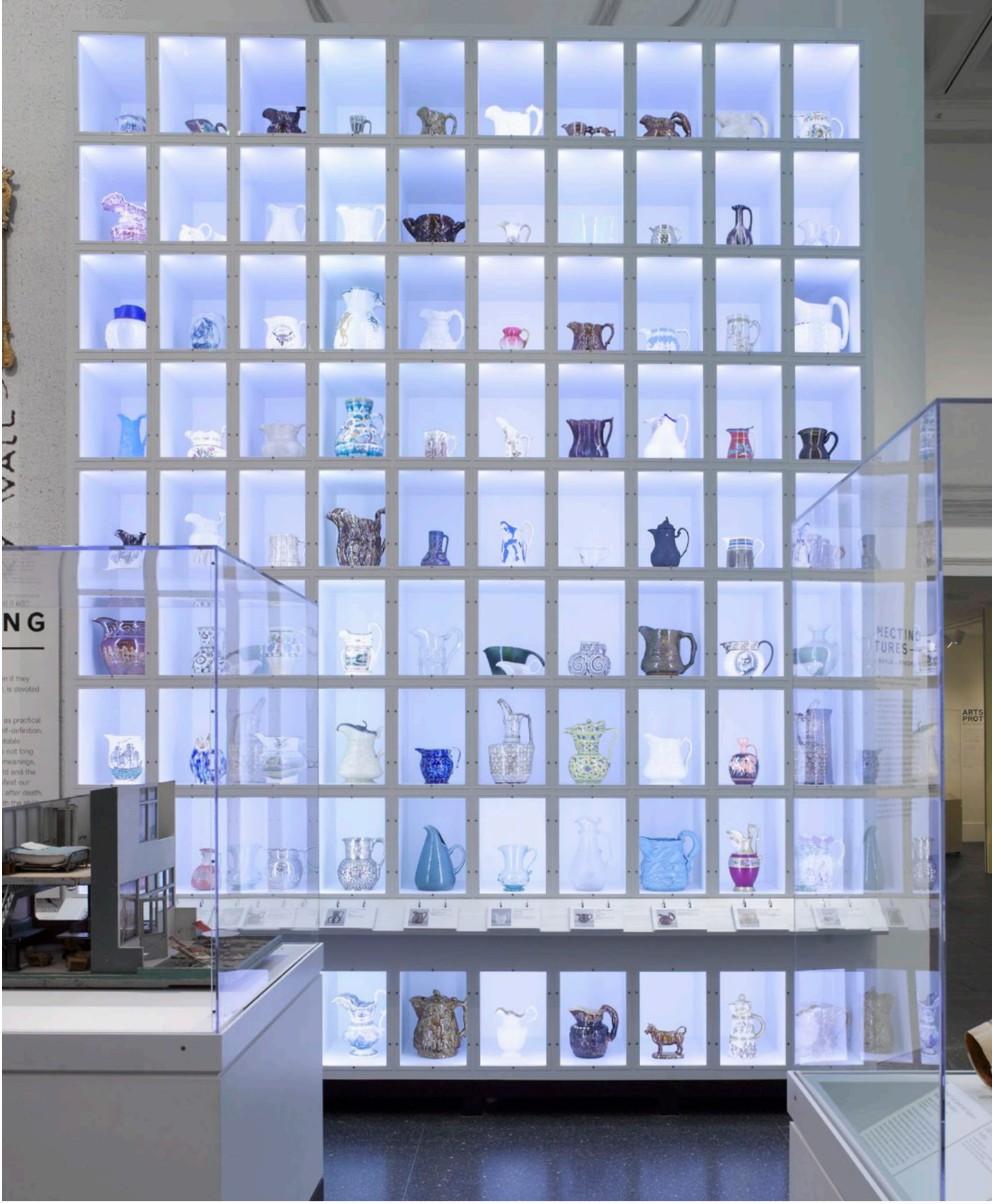
1 "BIPOC Open Letter," BIPOC Jewelry Designers, accessed December 5, 2020, https://bipocopenletter.com. / **2** I have primarily drawn upon methods used in the ongoing effort to decolonize museums in North America and Aotearoa/New Zealand (Lonetree; Anderson; the Assembly of First Nations and the Canadian Museums Association; Luoni) and from discourse within the field of critical museum studies/critical museology (Lorente; Drake; Lehrer, Patterson, and Milton). / **3** Mary Nooter Roberts, "Inscribing Identity: The Body," in *Inscribing Meaning: Writing and Graphic Systems in African Art*, (Washington D.C: Smithsonian, 2007), 55. / **4** Jesús Pedro Lorente, "From the White Cube to a Critical Museography: The Development of Interrogative, Plural and Subjective Museum Discourses," in *From Museum Critique to the Critical Museum* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 115. / **5** As of February 2021, the Met has begun a renovation of the Michael C. Rockefeller Wing, where they intend to create three separate galleries for Sub-Saharan African Art, Ancient American Art, and Oceanic Art. / **6** Julia Petrov, *Fashion, History, Museums: Inventing the Display of Dress* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2019), 85-86. / **7** Ibid, 77-79. / **8** Matthew Shenoda, "Race, History, and the Body," *World Literature Today,* Vol. 94, No. 2 (2020): 22, https://doi.org/10.7588/worllitetoda.94.2.0022. / **9** Friday, Matthew, Justine Woods, Funlola Coker, Pasha Moezzi, and Ji Huang, "A Conversation on Cultural Appropriation and Appreciation in the Arts," panel discussion, November 2, 2020. / **10** "NYC Jewelry Week: Robert Lee Morris: Sacred Geometry," Pratt.edu, November 2019, accessed December 4, 2020. / **11** Bella Neyman, "Robert Lee Morris: Staying Power," *Metalsmith*, Vol. 40, Issue 1, (2020): 42. / **12** Alfred Archer and Benjamin Matheson, "When Artists Fall," *Journal of the American Philosophical Association,* Vol. 5, No. 2, (2019): 255, https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2019.9. / **13** Monica Eileen Patterson, "Teaching Tolerance through Objects of Hatred: The Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia as 'Counter-Museum,'" in *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent Pasts in Public Places*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 66. / **14** David Luoni, National Services Te Paerangi Resource Guide Issue #27: Exhibition Display Techniques, (Wellington, New Zealand: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2017), https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/sites/default/files/27_exhibition_display_techniques_2.pdf. / **15** matt lambert, "Jewelry: A Beautiful Problem," Athens Jewelry Week 2020, accessed December 03, 2020, https://athensjewelryweek.com/press/jewelry-a-beautiful-problem-by-mat-lambert. [sic] / **16** Märit Simonsson, "Displaying Spaces: Spatial Design, Experience, and Authenticity in Museums" (dissertation, Department of Culture and Media Studies, Umeå University, 2014). / **17** Fiona Candlin, Micromuseology: An Analysis of Small Independent Museums, 1st ed (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 6. / **18** The Assembly of First Nations and The Canada Museums Association, *Turning the Page: Forging New Partnerships Between Museums and First Peoples* (Ottawa: Task Force on Museums and First Peoples, 1994), 8, https://museums.in1touch.org/uploaded/web/docs/Task_Force_Report_1994.pdf. / **19** Ashleigh Kane, Chris Hayes, and Elise Bell, "What Do We Do with Art Made by Bad People?" *Dazed*, January 30, 2018, https://www.dazeddigital.com/art-photography/article/38829/1/what-do-we-do-with-art-made-by-bad-people. / **20** Yuliya Komska, "From 2017: How Germany Handles Monuments from Nazi and Communist Era," *The Inquirer*, June 18, 2020, https://www.inquirer.com/philly/opinion/commentary/charlottesville-nazis-germany-communists-monuments-trump-20170817.html-2.



An example of non-hierarchical display at *Connecting Cultures: A World in Brooklyn*, Brooklyn Museum.

Photo: Brooklyn Museum. Digital Collections and Services. *Connecting Cultures: A World in Brooklyn*. [04/19/2012 - 10/02/2016]. Installation view.

Keepers of the Flame

The American Blacksmithing Revival

By Glenn Adamson

Lumpkin, Georgia, March 17, 1973:

A group of blacksmiths sits together, talking heatedly about the state of their trade. It has been dying a slow death for decades, ever since the replacement of horse-drawn carts by automobiles at the beginning of the twentieth century, and the displacement of hand-wrought tools and equipment by mass-produced ones. The business was wiped out in the course of a generation: many forges closed, while others were converted to garages (a process memorably captured in Buster Keaton's classic short 1922 film *The Blacksmith*). Once one of the nation's most widely practiced and economically vital crafts, by the mid twentieth century, blacksmithing had become a marginalized activity, its sights mainly fixed on the past, with little compass for creativity.

The blacksmiths in Lumpkin wanted to change all that. On that spring morning, they formed a new organization with the declared purpose of reviving ironwork as a creative discipline. The response was extraordinary. With twenty-seven founding members, the organization—named the Artist-Blacksmith Association of North America (ABANA)—soon attracted hundreds of members, then thousands. Skills were learned and shared. Touring exhibitions like *Iron: Solid Wrought / USA* (1976–77) were mounted. Books were published, as well as a special interest journal, nicely titled *The Anvil's Ring*. In 1979, an institution devoted to the discipline—the National Ornamental Metal Museum, now known more simply as the Metal Museum—opened in Memphis.

This phenomenon closely paralleled the contemporaneous renaissance of woodwork (turning and furniture-making), and the slightly earlier revival of glassblowing. Though lacking the robust gallery support network of those two fields—their work was too heavy and too costly to make it viable in that commercial context—blacksmiths enjoyed a similar sense of camaraderie and competition. They also faced similarly difficult questions about orientation. Should ABANA serve the professional artist, the avid hobbyist, traditional craft, or contemporary design? Eventually, that question became less pressing, simply because of the organization's success. Blacksmithing could thrive at the amateur level, with interest centered principally on historic techniques and forms—a tendency amplified by the Bicentennial in 1976—while simultaneously expanding at the elite level, with amateurs serving as a significant audience for professionals.

In short order, two clear leaders emerged in the discipline: Albert Paley, who was already well known for his spectacular jewelry when he got the commission of a lifetime, a set of gates for the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery, which made him a nationally recognized figure; and L. Brent Kington, who led the only academic program in the field at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. Both of these men cleverly adapted familiar historic tropes in their

Previous spread:

Left:
Albert Paley
Fabricated Fireplace Tools, 1996
Steel
40½ x 16 x 14in.
Metal Museum Permanent Collection,
Gift of Thornton Jordan, 2020.3.1a-d
Photo: Kim Ward

Right:
C. Carl Jennings
Inverted Viking Helmet with Three Horns, 1994
Mild steel
10 x 6¾ x 7 in.
Metal Museum Permanent Collection,
Gift of the Artist, 2003.7.8
Photo: Houston Cofield

Dimitri Gerakaris
Eagle Square Gateway, 1983
Forged and fabricated, color-galvanized steel
across Main Street from the state capitol in Concord, NH
27 x 40 x 6 ft.
Photo: Sherman G. Howe
© Dimitri Gerakaris

This work replaced a historic building that was fire-damaged beyond repair and serves as the entry to a new city square, punctuating a line of live trees. It was innovative in 1983 for the way it seamlessly combined forged steel plate with forged steel bars to achieve architectonic mass and to overcome the linear quality of steel bars commonly produced in twenty-foot lengths.

Dimitri Gerakaris
Boylston Place Gateway, 1988
Forged and fabricated, color-galvanized steel
plus forged and fabricated bronze, leading
to the Boston Theater District from Boston Common
19 x 24 x 6 ft.
Photo: Sherman G. Howe
© Dimitri Gerakaris

Gerakaris seamlessly combines forged steel plate with forged steel bars to achieve architectonic mass and to overcome the customary linear quality of steel bars that constrained the design possibilities of preceding smiths.

work, with Paley taking inspiration from the whiplash lines of Art Nouveau, and Kington making dynamic variations on the forms of Americana—weathervanes, fireplace tools, even the hobby horse. In more recent years, the most prominent blacksmith working in the US has probably been Tom Joyce, renowned for his implementation of industrial-scale tooling and his thoughtful engagement with the materiality of iron itself, which has included an in-depth study of African metalwork. While younger than most of the other artists discussed here, Joyce also has roots in the 1970s, when he apprenticed as a teenager under the printer and blacksmith Peter Wells in El Rito, New Mexico. He started his own shop in Santa Fe in 1977, at the age of twenty-one.

There were also many other smiths in the revival generation, equally fired by the ambition to creatively develop the craft. Among them were James "Wally" Wallace, founding director of the National Ornamental Metal Museum; Alex Bealer, whose 1969 book *The Art of Blacksmithing* served as an informal bible for the field; artist-blacksmiths Dimitri Gerakaris and Robert Owings, both of whom served as editors of *The Anvil's Ring*; the brothers Stephen and Michael Bondi, specialists in creative architectural work; and talented makers like Ivan Bailey, Thomas Bredlow, E.A. Chase, and Christopher Ray, all capable of extraordinary invention and finesse. Many of Kington's students have also gone on to success in the field, including some from his first years of teaching blacksmithing at SIU, such as Wallace, Philip Baldwin, and Joel Schwartz.

The story of all these makers deserves to be told in full depth and detail. This article draws on interviews with Wallace, Gerakaris, and Michael Bondi. The first of two articles, it aims to make a start, by focusing on the period just prior to the revival of the '70s and '80s. This was when the iron was cool, the craft at its lowest ebb. If not for the persistence of a few remarkable craftsmen—figures whom Gerakaris describes as the

L. Brent Kington
Dragster, ca. early 1960s
Sterling silver
3¼ x 2¾ x 4½ in.
Metal Museum Permanent
Collection, Gift of
Michael Croft, 2016.9.1
Photo: Kim Ward

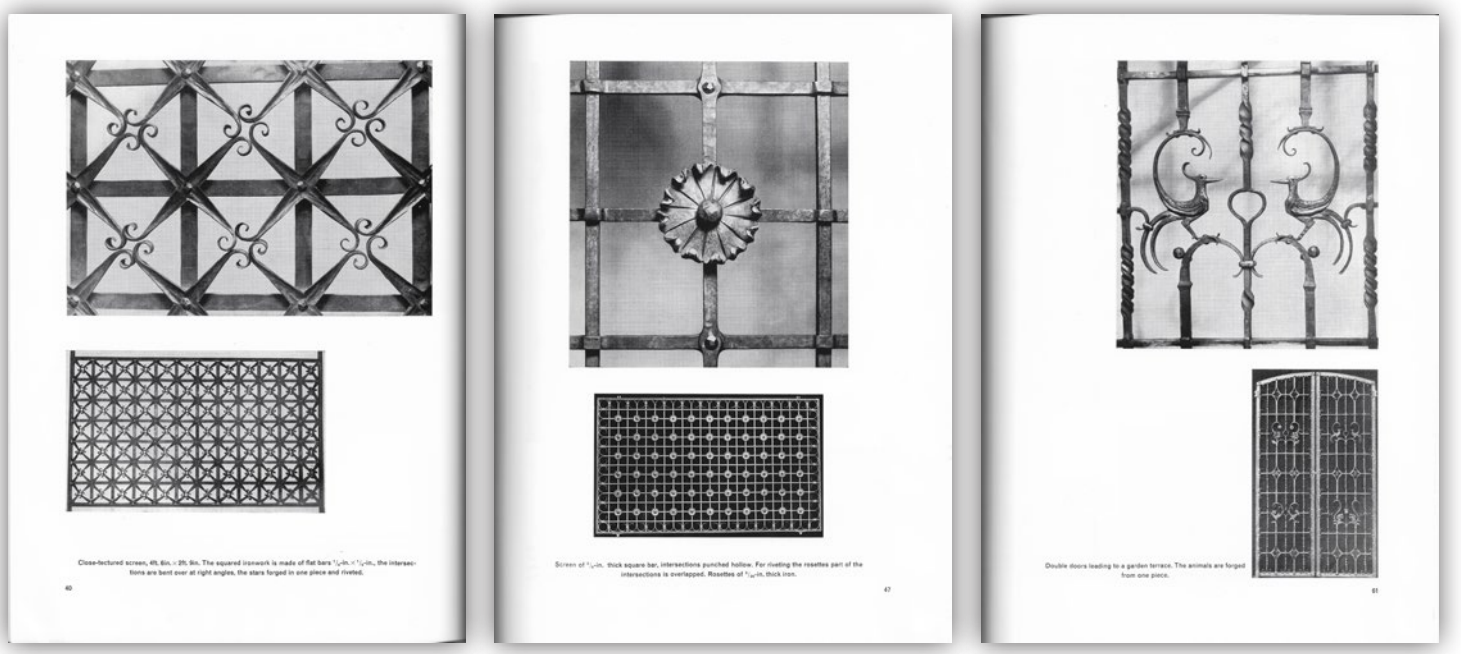
"keepers of the flame"—the 1970s generation would have faced an even greater struggle in restoring the discipline to vitality.

An emblematic example is that of James and Ben Deal, brothers who operated a grocery, junk shop, and blacksmithing forge in Murphysboro, Illinois. James had learned blacksmithing at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, the vocationally oriented school for African-American students set up by Booker T. Washington. He opened his shop in 1933, teaching the craft in turn to his younger brother. The two brothers ran a thriving if eclectic business, diversifying across a huge range of jobs, making small household goods and fixing everything from lawnmowers to farm plows. A local paper captured the atmosphere of the place in 1978: "The brothers can fish around under any pile of steel and come out with what they are looking for, sometimes a finished job with the price tag scrawled in soapstone crayon." It hardly sounds like the birthplace for an artistic renaissance, but it was here that Brent Kington—who was already well-trained in light metals—had his first lessons in ironworking, having identified the Deals as the only proficient blacksmiths working anywhere near Carbondale.

To be sure, not all aspiring smiths of the revival relied on domestic sources. Just as glassblowers looked to the island of Murano near Venice, woodworkers set their sights on Scandinavia, and potters studied the rich tradition of Japan, blacksmiths sought out training in Europe. The trade had been considerably less disrupted there, thanks to continuing interest in architectural ornament. After World War II, blacksmiths were more in demand than ever, as reconstruction projects were undertaken across the continent. Americans were well aware (and somewhat in awe) of figures such as the formidable Fritz Kühn, an East German smith who had trained under his father and went on to teach his son Achim.

> Philip Simmons, an African-American blacksmith in Charleston, South Carolina, was initially trained by a formerly enslaved artisan. That was not uncommon, as both free and enslaved Blacks were widely involved in architectural crafts such as masonry and carpentry—**the South was quite literally built by their hands.**

Kühn's work was widely known through his own books—he published no fewer than twelve in his lifetime—and exhibitions like *Towards a New Iron Age*, which originated at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and toured the US in 1983. His shop was behind the Iron Curtain, so it was not possible to study there, but a few adventurous Americans did travel to Europe to study with other masters: the Bondis apprenticed at the studio of Simone Benetton in Treviso, Italy; Ivan Bailey studied for a year with Fritz Ulrich in Aachen. In 1974, for the first official ABANA conference, Ulrich came to demonstrate, making him the first of many European masters to come and impart his knowledge. Ulrich did not speak English, but Gerakaris, who had spent time in Freiburg, Germany, on a foreign study program, was able to serve as his translator, and included insights he gained from the experience in



Metal Museum Library Collection, Fritz Kühn, *Wrought Iron, 3rd Edition*. (Huntingdon, PA: Blue Moon Press, 2010), 41, 47, 61. Images of *Close-textured Screen*, *Screen*, and *Double Doors*, from his book *Wrought Iron*. Photos courtesy of the Metal Museum.

Simon Benetton
Punto d'Incontro, 1984
Steel
53 x 24 x 28 in.
Metal Museum Permanent Collection,
ABANA Collection, 2016.1.284
Photo: Kim Ward

The Anvil's Ring. He saw German makers like Ulrich and Kühn, as well as the Benettons in Italy, as "the main exponents of a modern idiom in forged iron."

In America, meanwhile, historic metalwork was a mainstay for the few blacksmiths who still swung a hammer. The two great luminaries of Arts and Crafts ironwork, Philadelphia's Samuel Yellin and Milwaukee's Cyril Colnik, had both been immigrants from Europe who specialized in that arena. Yellin's shop, still operational though at a much-reduced level in comparison to its glory days as a shop with 200 artisans at work, was one place that a young blacksmith could get to grips with hammer and anvil; Christopher Ray and Fred Crist were among those who spent time there, as well as Peter Renzetti and Dimitri Gerakaris. In the 1920s and 1930s, Kenneth J. Lynch was the leading blacksmith in the New York area, conducting repairs on the Statue of Liberty and creating metalwork for many Manhattan buildings, including a set of Art Deco doors for the Chrysler Building.

The Colonial Revival of this time also created opportunities. Philip Simmons, an African-American blacksmith in Charleston, South Carolina, was initially trained by a formerly enslaved artisan. That was not uncommon, as both free and enslaved Blacks were widely involved in architectural crafts such as masonry and carpentry—the South was quite literally built by their hands. Simmons was one of only a handful of African-American blacksmiths to continue working in architectural ornament full-time, however. He took over his mentor's shop in 1933, in the depths of the Depression. It was only the sudden enthusiasm for historic preservation, animated by the Colonial Revival, that created a market for his work.

Up in Virginia, meanwhile, the enormous undertaking of the preservation and construction of Colonial Williamsburg meant work for men like Daniel Boone VI, who won the contract for restoring and replacing the town's historic metalwork in 1937. He was succeeded by John Allgood (who was present at the early ABANA meetings), and also trained another smith, Bea Hensley, who grew up next to Boone's shop in Burnsville, North Carolina. Hensley remembered watching from the door when he was only four years old; he would eventually take over the shop when Boone

Samuel Yellin
Andirons, ca. 1920
Wrought iron, brass
16½ x 12 x 21 in. (each)
Metal Museum Permanent Collection,
Gift of Clare Yellin, 1992.6.3a-b
Photo: Kim Ward

Michael Bondi
Rosette, 1989
Bronze
2¾ x ¼ in.
Metal Museum Permanent Collection,
10th Anniversary Gates Rosette
Collection, 2014.2.212
Photo: Kim Ward

retired. While the famous craft school in nearby Penland did not have a forge, Hensley's shop became a regular pilgrimage destination for aspiring young smiths.

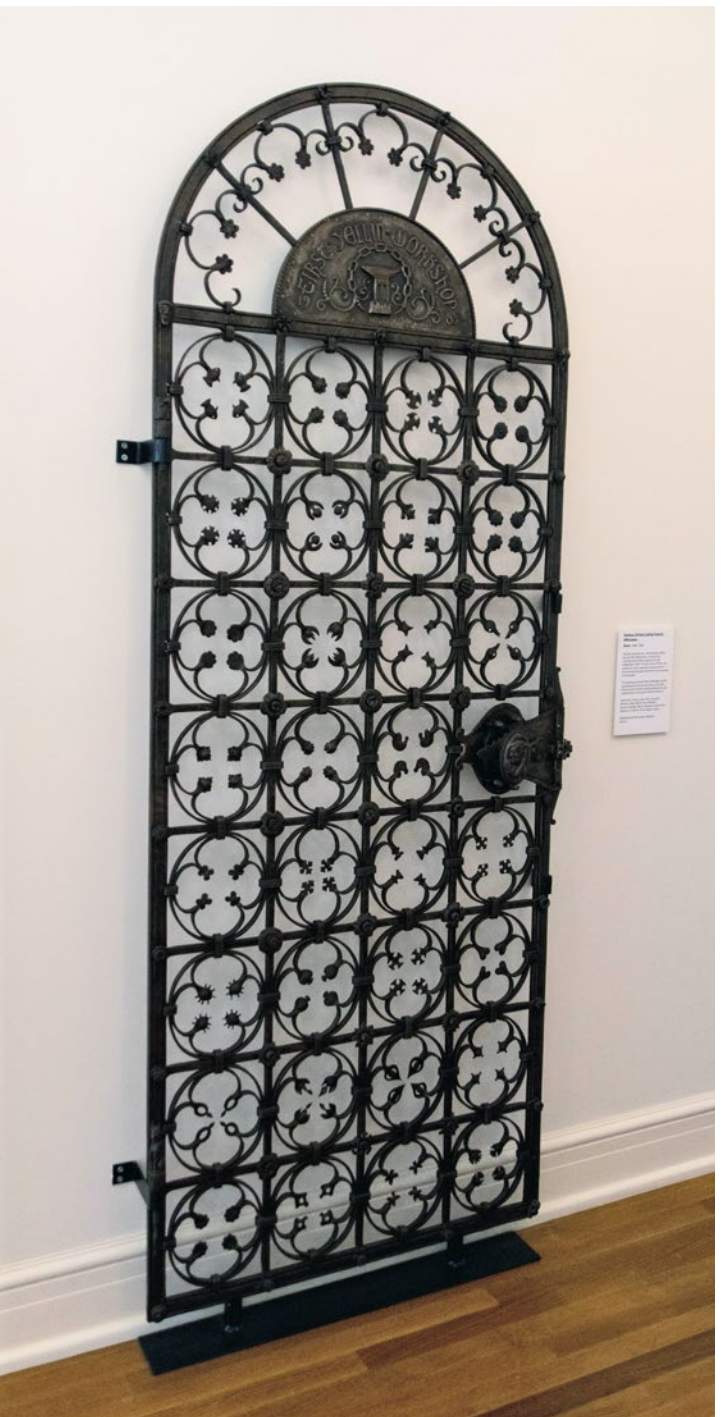
As these stories imply, the overall orientation of midcentury blacksmithing was conservative; skills were preserved along with the material fabric of the past, providing little impetus for innovation. The more artistically inclined smiths of the 1970s—men like Paley, Kington, Gerakaris, and the Bondis—sometimes formed strong bonds with older smiths. A good example is Donald Streeter, a leader in historic preservation based in New Jersey, whose 1980 book *Professional Blacksmithing* supplemented Bealer's earlier text as a key resource. Yet in other cases, they found themselves at odds with the generation that preceded them. A particularly reactionary, though memorable, figure was Francis Whitaker, who had some basic training in Yellin's Philadelphia shop, then went on a two-year apprenticeship with a blacksmith in Berlin. After returning to the US, he set up shop in Carmel, California, and subsequently in Aspen, Colorado. Whitaker was apparently a real curmudgeon, with little inherent interest in fostering the next generation of talent; Wallace says, "If he didn't want to talk to you, he'd just start up an arc welder, and conversation became impossible."[1] Yet he was also an effective teacher for basic techniques, and when he did begin coming to ABANA conferences in 1976, he proved an important source of knowledge and skill for less experienced makers.

Among the midcentury blacksmiths, one stands out as a particular innovator: C. Carl Jennings, whom Bondi calls "the godfather of creative smithing in America." His uniquely artistic approach to the medium was

As these stories imply, the overall orientation of midcentury blacksmithing was conservative; skills were preserved along with the material fabric of the past, **providing little impetus for innovation.**

Phillip Baldwin
Window Grille Study, 1978
Mild steel
21½ x 26 x 3 in.
Metal Museum Permanent Collection,
Gift of Nancy Baldwin, 2010.2.2
Photo: Kim Ward

Various Artists
led by Francis Whitaker
Door, 1983–84
Steel
86 x 33 x 4 in.
Metal Museum Permanent Collection,
Gift of Clare Yellin, 2018.2.1
Photo: Kim Ward



the result of his exposure to several different influences early in his career. Born and raised in Illinois, his father and grandfather were both practicing blacksmiths. In the 1920s, he went to study applied art at the California College of Arts and Crafts, and worked in a welding shop in Alameda, getting additional training from another European immigrant craftsman, a John Forester (or Foster), who had come from Hungary. Jennings's skill set further expanded during World War II, when he worked as a welder in the booming Naval shipyards.

After the war, Jennings established himself as a metalworker of extraordinary skill and vision, creating both functional and purely sculptural work in copper and iron. His masterpiece was his own home in Sonoma County, designed and built in collaboration with his wife Elizabeth (whom he met at CCAC), beginning in 1969. The round stone structure is festooned with his metalwork, from wrought iron lighting to a fantastical fireplace in *repoussé* copper. It bears strong comparison to other crafted homes in California, such as that of J.B. Blunk in Inverness. Nothing in it is standardized—it is a monument to intense individualism. (A short documentary film on the house, including interview material with Jennings, can be seen on the Metal Museum website.)

Jennings did help younger craftspeople in the 1970s, teaching occasionally at the College of the Redwoods, and serving as the first vice president of the California Blacksmith Association. But the most important lesson that he and the other blacksmiths of his generation offered was beyond technique. By maintaining their practices at a time when the trade was thoroughly becalmed, the Deals, Simmons, Hensley, Whitaker and Jennings showed that it was indeed still possible to be a working blacksmith in America. From that foundation, a whole discipline reinvented itself.

Glenn Adamson is a curator, writer, and historian based in New York. His newest book is Craft: An American History, *published by Bloomsbury in January 2021.*

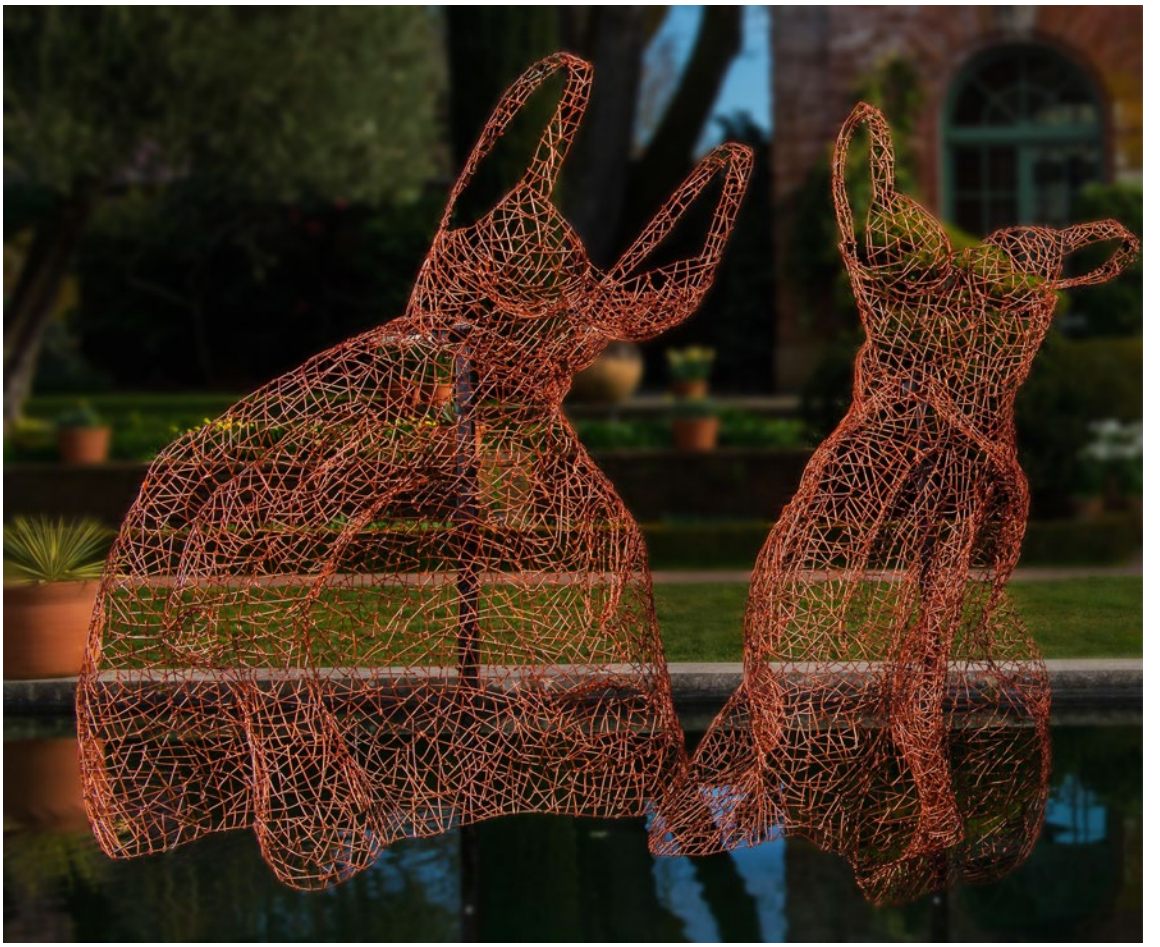
1 Author interview with James Wallace, conducted December 29, 2020.

Moving

BEYOND ACKNOWL-EDGMENT

Systemic Barriers for Black American Metalsmiths

By Velina Robinson Glass



Kristine Mays
Ancestral Spin (installation), 2019
Wire
44 x 42 x 29 in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

against the backdrop of the Black Lives Matter movement and the rising surge of organized white supremacy, the time to evaluate the impact of racism on Black American[1] jewelry and metals artists is past due.

I conducted interviews with and surveyed artists, educators, gallerists, and curators over a six-month period in 2020, and through these conversations a story unfolded of the Black American jewelry and metal artist's wholesale disenfranchisement through systemic and cultural racism. This article identifies elements within the field that contribute knowingly or unknowingly to widespread racism and unearned privilege; highlights how some organizations are working to dismantle racist structures; and shares the voices of Black American jewelry and metals artists whose practices and careers have been affected by racism within the community.

Higher education should be a gateway for introducing future Black jewelry and metals artists to the field but poses significant barriers to access. The prohibitive cost of an arts education, culturally biased admissions processes, and diversity policies that group together all non-white applicants limit the number of scholarships available to Black Americans. A survey of six art colleges and universities and interviews with the directors of the Rhode Island School of Design, Temple University in Philadelphia, and Pratt Institute in New York about their jewelry and metalsmithing programs revealed an acknowledgment of the barriers to access for Black Americans; however, each school's approach and stage in the process of changing these barriers vary widely.[2] Of the six schools and universities, only two offered diversity scholarships and neither one was awarded to a Black American student in 2020. Of the three schools interviewed, RISD is further along in the implementation of a formal diversity plan and is proactively working to break down barriers and eliminate institutionalized racism.

Funlola Coker
Untitled, 2021
Fine silver, sterling silver, artist's hair, stainless steel
4 x ¼ in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

David Harper Clemons

Pewter Salad Servers: Pattern No. 1, 2020
Cast and fabricated pewter
10¾ x 3 x ⅜ in.
Photo by the artist

The Overlooked — Breadbasket No. 1, 2018
Forged and fabricated mild steel, copper, brass, hickory
14 x 12 x 14 in.
Photo by the artist

Previous spread:

Left:
David Harper Clemons
Bone Handle Spice Jar, 2020
Fabricated pewter, bone, eggshell, wood
4½ x 3¼ in.
Photo by the artist

Right:
Funlola Coker
Portable Pillow, 2021
Mild steel, sterling silver, silicone cord
4 x 2½ in.
Photo: Lynn Batchelder

Change at RISD was catalyzed in 2016 by the student documentary film *The Room of Silence*, which focused on race, identity, and marginalization. The film's title describes the reaction students receive during critiques when presenting work related to race or social commentary. RISD responded to a student and faculty call to action by implementing Project Thrive. Mindful that it is essential to bring multicultural students into a supportive and inclusive environment, Project Thrive was established as a multiyear student support and learning community program. Originally designed for first-generation college students and offering academic advising and peer and faculty mentorship, it has evolved to include minority and underrepresented students. RISD's Race in Art & Design Cluster Hire Search added ten new faculty positions whose scholarship, practice, and pedagogies related to the African American and African diasporas, Indigenous North American, and Latinx communities.

The pre-pandemic metals students at RISD numbered forty-seven in total with one Black American student. When asked whether RISD has adequately developed practices to recruit and retain Black Americans, Tracy Steepy, head of the Metals Department, responded, "We have been partnering with the Department of Teaching and Learning on a community outreach program called Project Open Door (POD) to provide entryways to jewelry making and studio experience for teens in Providence public high schools. We view this mission as central to addressing social equity in the jewelry field, with goals to establish pathways for the local community to the jewelry and metals BFA program at RISD and higher education in general, as well as a step towards vocational training and careers linked to the local jewelry industry." RISD's Presidential Fellowship is not directed specifically towards Black American students but designed to fit a broader nonspecific goal of diversity. The first Presidential Fellowship full tuition waiver was granted in 2021 for a student to attend the Jewelry and Metals MFA program.

Funlola Coker is a Nigerian-born metalsmith who has trained and resided in the US for the past thirteen years. Coker's ancestors returned to Yoruba after the US emancipation, and her dual residency provides her with an interesting perspective on her role within the art jewelry community. As a metalsmith currently studying at SUNY New Paltz, Coker has not encountered other Black American metalsmiths, and she feels isolated from Black American artists. Coker shared that since she is attending graduate school on a minority scholarship, she feels guilty because she is not a Black American. Similar to other artists who are raised outside of the US in communities where they are the majority, deciphering the subtle or overt racism they encounter in the US may not feel the same as it does to a Black American artist. This is just one example of the gulf between Black Americans and other Black people residing in the US.

Tanya Crane

Pink Squirrel, 2020
Copper, enamel, sterling silver, driftwood with shells imbedded
4 x 2½ x 2½ in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

Big Pimpin', 2014
Copper, enamel, 18k gold, 24k gold plated brass
25 x 8 x ¼ in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

When asked if she had any concerns about the initiatives RISD is taking, Steepy replied, "I'm hopeful of the things I see institutionally from the faculty down to the students. What I am cautious about now is how it goes from academic leadership up." Steepy's caution is valid. If inclusive leadership is not part of the mobilization, any attempt at long-term inclusion or diversity will not succeed.

During an interview with Patricia Madeja, Coordinator of the BFA Jewelry program at Pratt Institute, she shared that the school has implemented two scholarships to promote diversity: the Wallace Augustus Rayfield Full Scholarships and The Catbird Scholarship for Diversity in Jewelry Arts. To Madeja's chagrin, Pratt has had only a handful of Black American students enrolled in its metals program in the twenty years that she has served as faculty and fifteen as program coordinator.

The Tyler School of Art Metals/Jewelry/CAD-CAM program at Temple University in Philadelphia has consistently included one or two Black American metals students out of a total of one hundred art students at any one time, perhaps partially as a result of its affordable tuition and urban location. Assistant professor and program head Doug Bucci seeks to improve this number through partnering with other university departments, community outreach, and developing a candidate referral process through Tyler's student teachers working in the public school system. When asked if the program received funds to achieve these goals, Bucci responded, "There is no budget."

Metals Museum Director Carissa Hussong reports, "One way we support Black artists is through our *Tributaries* series. One of the three solo exhibitions planned for 2020 featured a Black American artist, but it was postponed until 2021 due to COVID-19. We are also planning a group exhibition of twenty-plus Black American artists for the summer of 2021, which will be curated by a Black American guest curator." Hussong attributes the museum's success to the vision of Black American curator Grace Stewart. Now the Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Project Manager at the American Alliance of Museums, Stewart focused on removing barriers to access, expanding the *Tributaries* program, and "intentional tipping," at the Metals Museum. The term, coined by Stewart, refers to addressing not just today's inequality but historical injustice and looks to repair the damage of more than 400 years of oppression.

Under Stewart's leadership, the Metals Museum changed a requirement that artists bear the shipping expenses for an exhibition, as the prohibitive costs excluded many Black artists from exhibitions. Stewart worked with the development team to earmark funds to cover shipping and reduced the number of exhibits mounted annually, opting for quality over quantity. Stewart stated that this transformation was only possible because of the support of the museum staff and leadership.

When asked to elaborate on what she felt were the most difficult changes required to implement a plan, Stewart stated, "The identification of barriers. You may do so by asking, 'What is it that I do that causes harm?' Once identified, build new systems because you cannot build a foundation on something that is already broken. Apply resources to bring about change because, in many cases, an organization's budget becomes its value statement."

Power-sharing at an organization's top echelon is also essential to dismantling systemic racism. For example, a 2018 Carnegie Mellon American Museum Association report found that forty-six percent of museum boards were all white, i.e., containing no people of color. An all-white board leads to two misperceptions: first, that there is a scarcity of Black Americans available to sit on boards; and second, that the "absence of a Black voice encourages the boards to make decisions that allow "virtue signaling," the action or practice of publicly expressing opinions or sentiments intended to demonstrate one's good character or the moral correctness of one's position on a particular issue, to be viewed as real change.

While universities, colleges, and museums are governed by boards, commercial galleries can choose their artists more independently, and yet Black American jewelry and metal artists are still

underrepresented. To understand why, I surveyed thirty US gallerists, and within represented artists there were only 0.1% Black American metalsmiths. When asked why so few Black American artists were represented, some common responses were: "How do I find Black American artists?" "There are so few Black Americans in the metalsmithing community." "I buy what I like." Or "I've never been approached by any Black artists."

When asked where they look for new artists, gallerists stated that they seek recommendations from faculty at colleges and universities with metals programs; request suggestions from currently represented artists; and take note of artists that appear in trade journals. Here is where we begin to see the depth of the systemic and cultural racism in jewelry and metalsmithing. If these programs are not accepting or graduating Black students at a rate that is reflective of the population, if none of a gallery's currently represented artists are Black, and if the gallerist is looking toward Eurocentric, Western aesthetics, then it is unlikely that these recommendations would lead to including more Black artists. As gallerists look to top trade journals, including *Metalsmith,* to identify and recruit new artists, they will find Black American artists, writers, and staff are woefully underrepresented and in some cases nonexistent. Under the leadership of owner Sandy Zane and director Jordan Eddy, Form and Concept in Santa Fe is currently working to expand the gallery's representation of Black American artists. When I spoke with Eddy in August 2020, I asked how many of the non-white artists shown at Form and Concept were Black Americans. Even Eddy was surprised to realize that although the gallery represents an impressively diverse group, the list only included one Black American artist.

However, Eddy realized that he already had a template for expanding representation. In the summer of 2020, Form and Concept mounted *Consilience,* initially scheduled as a solo show of works by Brian Fleetwood, an Indigenous American metalsmith and a professor at the Institute of American Indian Arts. Eddy explained, "Under Fleetwood's

While universities, colleges, and museums are governed by boards, commercial galleries can choose their artists more independently, and yet Black American jewelry and metal artists are still underrepresented.

Kristine Mays

Left:
self acceptance, 2014
Wire
60 x 32 x 12 in.

Right:
grace shines upon me, 2014
Wire
65 x 32 x 10 in.

Photo courtesy of the artist

Nikesha Breeze
The Arc of Return, 2021
Baltic birch, hand-etched copper plates, copper mesh
96 x 48 x 18 in.
Photo: Byron Flesher
Courtesy of Form & Concept

"Why is it so often the role of minority artists to educate others on our condition and comment on our place within and engage with the society in which we live?"

guidance, *Consilience* expanded from a solo exhibition to a biographical group show that featured artists from different chapters of Fleetwood's life. The show has caused a ripple effect: some of those artists now regularly show their work with us, and another show featuring three of the *Consilience* artists is forthcoming."

By applying a similar approach for the April 2021 solo exhibit of interdisciplinary artist Nikesha Breeze, Eddy was introduced to Earthseed Black Arts Alliance, a Black-led organization inspired by Octavia Butler's science fiction novel *Parable of the Sower*. Through Breeze and Earthseed, Form and Concept has expanded Breeze's solo exhibition to include other Black American artists. When asked for the best way for a traditional curator to expand their gallery to include Black American artists, he suggested, "Hire a guest curator!"

Then there are the accounts of gallery owners who directly try to affect the Black American artist's aesthetic and exposure. When asked about her gallery relationships, self-taught metalsmith Kristine Mays stated, "One gallery asked me not to place an image of myself on my website. To counteract this attempt to make me invisible, I placed a large image right on my home page." Mays, whose sculptural wire work depicts the human form, also mentioned a gallerist who suggested that instead of pursuing a new direction in her work—reflecting realistic women's body types, particularly her now-signature tummy bulge—that she should revert to the model-thin designs she made early in her career. Mays expressed her view of systemic racism as, "There are collections presented as American jewelry, American sculpture, yet there is no representation of Black artists. Even with our lens and vision of the world, we are still within the American arts perspective. It is all the little things that chip away at the honor and respect by denying the existences of Black artists."

Rhode Island–based enamelist Tanya Crane says that she and other Black American artists have been bombarded in recent years with requests for their work to focus on Black Lives Matter. Her response is, "This attempt to pigeonhole my work is blatant and insulting. As a biracial artist, I find it sometimes uncomfortable navigating this world, and it is an insult to make Black Americans responsible for their content."

Asked if he had encountered adverse

responses to the work he makes, artist David Harper Clemons recently said in an email, "I recall a couple of incidents during question-and-answer sessions after giving lectures about my work. I received comments that discount the value of the works that I execute outside of the category of social and racial commentary. The comments were offered as compliments of the work and earnest critical feedback, conveying an appreciation for how I presented the topics in a poignant and impactful manner. But the underlying encoded message was that the other work was of lesser importance and should not be explored. I have the same right as any other artist to follow the drive of my varied muses. Why is it so often the role of minority artists to educate others on our condition and comment on our place within and engage with the society in which we live?"

When I contacted interdisciplinary Detroit artist Tiff Massey for this article, she stated, "What is there to discuss: water is wet?" In 2011, Massey was the first Black woman to graduate with an MFA in metalsmithing from Cranbrook Academy of Art and the first to receive Art Jewelry Forum's Susan Beech Mid-Career Artist Grant in 2019. In the lead up to Massey's award acceptance during Munich Jewellery Week, she was bombarded with questions smothered in racist undertones, questions that assumed that as a Black artist she represented or spoke for all Black jewelers and metalsmiths. Tiff threw away her acceptance speech and instead shared with her audience a list of the many racist questions she received during her stay.

Today, Massey's mission centers around building a studio and school within a community in Detroit that has limited access to the arts. She believes that by stepping out of the narrowly defined traditional paths available to artists, the studio and school will produce a new generation of formally trained Black artists. Meanwhile, Tanya Crane has taken it upon herself to bring about small changes. "Since the beginning of this modern-day Civil War and as a result of that lack of community-based continuing education, I now require continuing education organizations where I teach classes to provide one to two scholarships to people of color," says Crane.

Innovative ways to break from systemic and cultural racism or bypass the traditional path are being modeled throughout the country. For example, the new Black in Jewelry Coalition (BIJC) is an international nonprofit membership organization dedicated to the inclusion and advancement of Black professionals in the gem and jewelry industry. "Black people work in and support the gem and jewelry industry, yet there is a disparity in our access to resources and opportunities," says president and co-founder Annie Doresca. "BIJC was formed to break this cycle."

Imagine if tomorrow every gallery owner decided to include Black American artists; every museum decided that every exhibition would include Black Americans; every publication decided that every issue would include a Black artist; and every metal school committed to Black American enrollment; and then they all set about to build the infrastructure to support these new policies. The art world would then look like a lot more like America itself.

Velina Robinson Glass is a resin artist and a contributing writer to Metalsmith *and* Metalsmith Tech. *Robinson Glass teaches at the Tampa Museum of Art and her work has been featured in* 500 Plastic Jewelry Designs: A Groundbreaking Survey of a Modern Material *by Lark Books.*

1 Black Americans have been identified by many terms, e.g., African American, which would include anyone from Africa, Black, Negro, People of Color, and the newest term BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color.) However, the designation of Black is the only name that we gave ourselves. History teaches us that Africa is a name made up by the colonizers and was originally the name of an English trading company. Thus, I choose to use Black or Black American. It also serves to clearly identify us as individuals that are the descendants of the transatlantic slave trade. / **2** I requested information from thirty colleges and universities with jewelry and metals programs, but most were nonresponsive. To narrow my focus and move forward with this piece, I focused on the Princeton Review's top six art schools: Rochester Institute of Technology, Temple University, Pratt Institute, Rhode Island School of Design, Savannah College of Art and Design, and The Fashion Institute of Technology.

AMEND

***Secret Identity Projects*, Virtual Exhibition 10.2.20 – 11.22.20**

By Jackie Andrews

Electoral politics was of crucial importance in the United States in 2020; the year saw numerous failures of government of catastrophic proportions, an expanding wealth chasm among Americans, and a growing urgency around social justice and racial equity. The 2020 presidential election brought a record voter turnout, and the first woman and person of color Vice President, Kamala Harris, was elected in the centennial anniversary year of the passing of the 19th Amendment in 1920, which gave (white) women the right to vote.

In commemoration of this anniversary, American artists and professors Kerianne Quick and Jess Tolbert, the collaborators behind the art jewelry curatorial project *Secret Identity Projects*, launched their latest curatorial initiative, *AMEND*. The exhibition challenged 100 jewelers to reimagine the quintessential "I Voted" sticker, while also "bring(ing) to the forefront the continued fight for true universal suffrage by promoting and supporting initiatives that combat voter suppression and advocate for expanding voting rights," according to the curatorial statement. In an effort to contribute to combating voter suppression, the exhibition used proceeds generated from the sale of work to support Black Voters Matter, an organization "dedicated to increasing power in marginalized, predominantly Black communities." The curatorial statement concluded with the Webster's definition of the term *amend*: "to make minor changes in (a text) in order to make it fairer, more accurate, or more up-to-date"; "to modify (formally), to make better, to improve"; and "to put right." These three descriptions provided the structure of the exhibition.

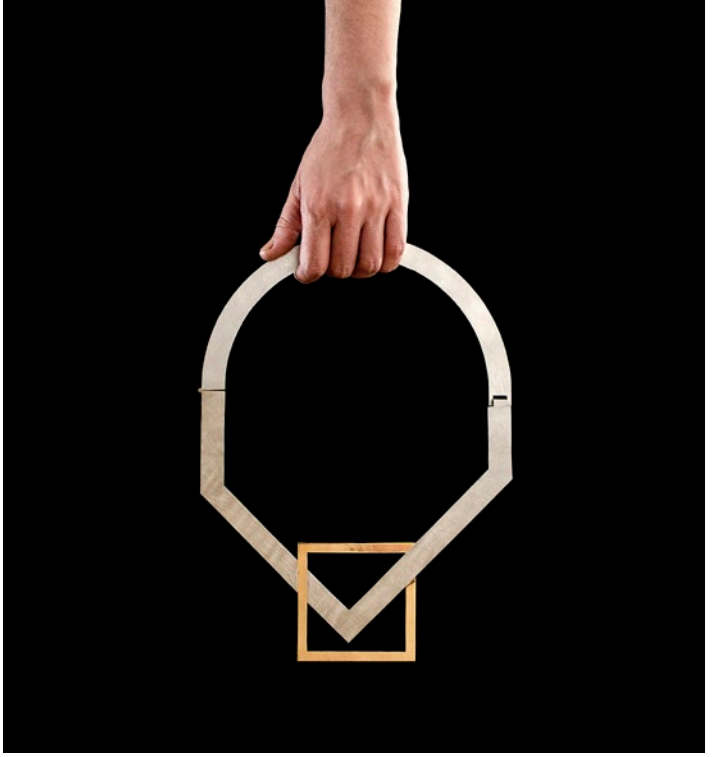
Jina Seo
Want to, 2020
Sterling silver, thread
3 x ½ x 1½ in.
Photo courtesy of the artist

While the effort to make *AMEND* all-encompassing was certainly a noble one, the broad scope of the theme at times made the exhibition seem lacking a decisive direction. Creating a cohesive display in a show of this size was a huge undertaking, even for a virtual format. Quick and Tolbert succeeded unequivocally in this regard: the site was easily navigable and accessible for a range of viewers. A variety of conceptual connections, techniques, and aesthetics were exhibited in the show, but the display was still digestible: the main exhibition page curated the works into groups that instigated dialogue among them and invited further exploration, while still leaving space to rest and consider each work.

The pieces I felt most drawn to were, in most cases, the "loudest" works in the show, pieces that approached the topic critically, skeptically, even aggressively, displayed a depth of personal connection with the topic, and represented the nuance and complexity of the issue. These works took the theme, asked questions of it, and challenged it, using the *AMEND* prompt expansively as a platform to speak to what is most important to their creators about suffrage.

Jillian Moore's *Not A Valentine* was easily one of my favorites: taking a cue (and its title) from author Rebecca Solnit's quote, "Voting isn't a valentine, it's a chess move..." She created a heart pendant cleverly coated with her signature dripping, sparkly resin, in an unexpected and exciting approach to the theme. Moore's work was refreshingly honest, unapologetically displaying her feelings about electoral politics. Similar in its playful irreverence and cautious optimism was Breana Ferrara's *I Want To Believe*. A painstakingly detailed statement piece, Ferrara's work deftly combined her bespoke beadwork and whimsical imagery with an explorative use of material and carefully considered excessiveness. Ferrara struck a similarly skeptical tone, offering the hope of just futures while also urging the viewer to "stay radical," continuously question the state of our world, and fight for equity without relying solely on electoral politics.

Leslie Shershow's *Big Money* stood out as one of *AMEND*'s more playful works, a kinetic brooch featuring vibrantly colored resin and laser cut aluminum, touting a message about the confluence of money and power in the political system; it was inspired by politician Nina Turner's quote, "The overflow of big money in politics drowns out the voices of everyday people." The reversible elements of the brooch brought to mind the often two-faced nature of career politicians and the influence of greed on policy, affecting the lives of everyday people.



Haydee Alonso
Check Yourself, 2020
Brass, nickel silver
10¾ x 7⅞ x ¼ in.
Photo by Miguel Vargas

AMEND also included six of the seven members of the well-respected contemporary jewelry group JV Collective, with each creating dynamic works that were in conversation and solidarity with one another. Leslie D. Boyd's performative adornment took statement jewelry to soaring new heights in *An Act. An Action*. Boyd's etched steel printing plate neckpiece brought awareness to the issue of voting restoration for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. Measuring fifty-three inches in length, the emblematic plate creatively re-structured the words of Colorado's House Bill 19-1266, which restored voting rights to these individuals statewide. This multidimensional work created a series in and of itself, engaging

the viewer on several levels—with a video of Boyd's public printing performance using the plate, purchasable prints from the performance, and the beauty of the object itself.

Mallory Weston's *Break Glass* also invited participation. A small metal hammer emblazoned with the work's title hung from a pastel-hued pierced chain in Weston's distinctive anodized titanium, elegantly defiant. A nod to the ubiquitous "In case of emergency, break glass" emergency message, the pendant—turned tool for revolution—addressed the ongoing fight for racial justice and protests against police violence in America, calling the viewer to action: "Protest, resist, smash windows, make your voice heard at all costs."

Sarah Rachel Brown took the participatory element of the voting sticker in a different direction in *A Lot To Say On The Subject*. Brown's clever choice of dry-erase material allowed each wearer to write their reason for casting their vote right on the brooch's surface, engaging directly with the idea of individualism versus collectivism in electoral politics, and asking the viewer to consider how and why they cast their vote.

Melanie Bilenker's *Push* offered a moment of quiet contemplation. The use of her signature twist on Victorian hair jewelry felt particularly poignant, as the technique was popularized a little over a century ago, a trend in close proximity to the initial campaigns for women's suffrage in the early twentieth century.

Betsy Lewis and Lynn Batchelder both shared Bilenker's quietly meditative quality in their works, *Through Line* and *Scatter*, respectively. Lewis's knotted silver forms in *Through Line* suggested openness to "a new moment to come," sharing a sense of hopeful envisioning with Batchelder's work. *Scatter* delicately balanced hope and precarity, just as its surface balanced a static sparkle with frenetic markmaking.

As a counterpoint to the works addressing the myriad social justice issues associated with suffrage, a few works took a more personal—familial—approach. Erin S. Daily and Lyndsay Rice both used their family heritage as a means of connection with the centennial. Daily's *A Pledge, A Vow* took the form of a pen, recalling a familial value—"Vote Democrat"—spanning generations of history. Rice's *Widmer, Levis, Plantz, Ercanbrack, Matti, Millar, Stelse, Bohn, Peterson, Thompson, Farrell, Bohn* referenced a family history and a sense of pride in being a Wisconsin native, the first state to ratify the 19th Amendment. Rice's work paid homage both to the women in her family who cast their first votes in 1920, and to the Victorian domestic aesthetic of the period.

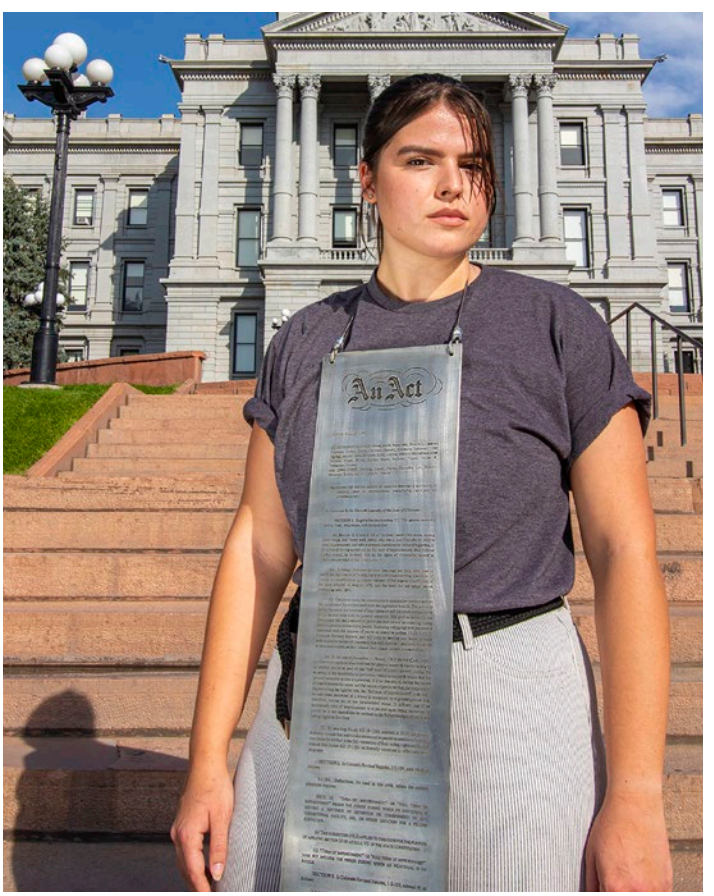
Jina Seo's simple but impactful *Want To* brooch underscored yet another flaw of our current voting system: the disenfranchisement of immigrants. Haydee Alonso echoed this sentiment, and furthered it with *Check Yourself*, a minimal work in brass and nickel steel, describing the Latinx community (the largest ethnic minority group eligible to vote in 2020, Alonso noted) as "the sleeping giant that could." Alonso urged the viewer to "speak for the people who can't speak for themselves" (read: the disenfranchised) by voting.

Another powerful statement on disenfranchisement came from Tara Locklear. In *100-55*, Locklear acknowledged the importance of the centennial, while also highlighting the fifty-fifth anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which provided people of color with the right to vote (more than thirty years later than white women, in 1920). Locklear also noted that "Black is required for all other colors to have depth and variation of hue"; the relevance of this statement in electoral politics is clear, particularly considering the unequivocally crucial role Black voters played in the outcome of the 2020 election. Tanya Crane's *Hair-Story* brooches, striking organic forms on enameled steel, addressed this exact idea: Crane's hair is burnt into the surface of the enamel, forming each unique silhouetted pattern. She explained that the permanence of each curl signified "...a testament to the work and sacrifice black women give to this country. Black Votes Matter."

When it closed in late November following New York City Jewelry Week, the exhibition culminated in a donation of more than $10,000 to Black Voters Matter, an impressive marker of success for the participating artists and curators Quick and Tolbert. Summarizing an exhibition as unwieldy and varied as *AMEND* is a herculean task: the works mentioned are a mere fraction of those in the show, but this fraction strengthened the *AMEND* message and used the platform to educate, instigate, and radicalize their audience in a way that left viewers more knowledgeable, inspired, and capable of working toward justice and truer democracy in America's future.

To see more images and information from the AMEND *exhibition, visit the* Secret Identity Projects *Instagram, @secret.identity.projects. Print copies of the* AMEND *catalog are also available through their Instagram.*

Jackie Andrews (she/they) is an interdisciplinary artist, writer, and emerging art historian based in rural Maryland. They are the co-founder of Power Clash Art.



Leslie D. Boyd
An Act. An Action., 2020
Steel
53 x ⅛ x 7 in.
Photo by Lizeth Hernandez

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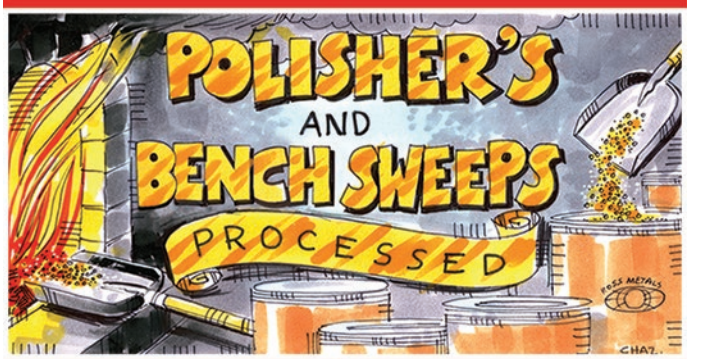

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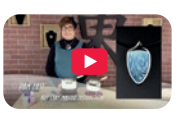

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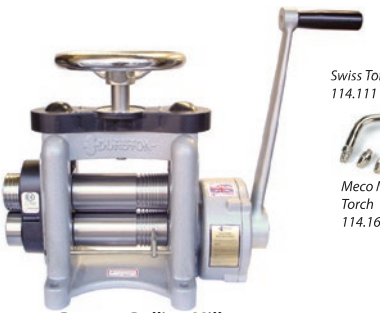

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